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Only Sense Online
オンリーセンス・オンライン
04
ファンタジア文庫

"Please call me Emilio. Other people call me—— 'Material Merchant'. Okay? Yun, the 'Nanny'."

エミリオ *Emilio*

A solo player who uses Alchemy and Synthesis to employ mobs. Emilio wields a special weapon, Connecting Sword. She appears in front of Yun wearing a mask, however——?

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"—《Steam Pillar》"

Sei created high pressure, high temperature steam, stewing the Sahagin!

"Won't you make a party with us and go on adventure in a dungeon, Missy?"

"Haa, since Yun-kun's been hiding recently Onee-san was very lonely."

"Wai-, it's embarrassing! Sei-nee and others are watching!"

"Yuncchi, I'll cling too!"

セイ Sei

Yun's real older sister. A member of 'Eight Million Gods'. Despite being a skilled mage, she seems to be haunted by the 'Greed Sensor'——?

ミカヅチ Mikaduchi

Guild master of OSO's largest guild 'Eight Million Gods'. She uses stick fighting to attack and specializes in close combat, she boast of top combat abilities.

ユン Yun

An intermediate crafter and archer who loves to play solo.

マギ Magi

Top armourer and a crafter proud of her abilities. She uses heavy weapons like axes and hammers, also handles fire element.

リーリー Lyly

One of the top crafters and a woodworker. During combat he equips【Dagger】to fight.

I turned around, and when I attempted to take a step away from the tree, another few dozens of undead have crawled out from the ground and surrounded us.

"Oh-hoh. Taking this many enemies at once is too hardcore. I'm thrilled."

ミュウ Myu

Yun's real little sister and a paladin. The greatest challenge is looming upon always enthusiastic Myu——?

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Prologue - Crafting Guild and Insect Repelling Incense

"——And so, I've managed to obtain some petals of the Wisteria Peach tree."

"What's that 'wisteria' tree you're talking about?"

"Didn't you hear from Miu-chan before? That they have passed through the Horror Cave and reached the Wisteria Peach tree."

I had no idea. I shook my head.

"There's just a single Wisteria Peach tree growing on a hill, it's always in full bloom and has pink petals."

"Hee〜. Sounds perfect for flower viewing."

Drinking a cup of sake in the moonlight night. Could be nice. Oops, if I think that I'll start thinking about cooking, and so I have discarded those thoughts.

"Ahh, that's impossible. Mobs in there spawn really fast so there's no opportunity for flower viewing. If anything, rather than a rain of petals, I'm guessing rain of blood would be more likely?"

"That's not something I want to hear during a meal."

A lunch break in school. Among a great number of students eating their lunch we were no exception and ate our lunches while having a disturbing conversation.

"After wiping out the spawning mobs, everyone gets a single petal of the Wisteria Peach tree."

"Is it some kind of quest item?"

"No, it's an inferior resurrection item that resurrects you at just 1 HP. By the way, Shun. As usual, your boxed lunch really is nutritiously balanced isn't it."

"Don't change the topic. But, you know what's going to happen if I leave lunch to Miu, don't you."

"Ah, well, we're the same after all. I can't really talk about others like this..."

My best friend Takumi who was right in front of me stared at my boxed lunch enviously and hurriedly ate the bread he bought, then washed it all down with juice.

I scowled at that poor nutritional balance, as Takumi's childhood friend, I knew why he would buy such a thing.

"Good grief, I wonder, where do you find time to play other games despite playing OSO."

"I have to squeeze out some time for that."

Squeeze out, you... I spat a tired sigh. That's right, Takumi saves up money from his lunch to buy games he wants to play.

On top of that, he continues to play a VRMMO, he's a really broken gamer.

Also, my little sister Miu is a broken gamer as well. If she were to be given money for lunch, the fact that it would turn out the same way could be easily understood by watching this childhood friend of mine. That's why, I make lunch boxes for two people every morning.

"You talk about others, but I know that you're doing quite well yourself."

"...what's that about?"

"I've heard from Miu-chan, but it seems like you're always logged in whenever you have some free time."

Takumi turned towards me smiling broadly.

As we faced each other, a shadow has appeared between us and a girl's voice has called out from over our heads.

"Let's see. Having free time would suggest you finished what you had to do. Takumi-kun."

When I looked up towards the source of the voice, I saw a female student stand there.

"Geh, Endo."

"If Endo-san has come, it means the due date has come again huh."

Her long hair was braided into a single plait that was hung over her shoulder, and there were strong-looking eyes behind her lower-rim glasses. Her expression was soft, but she left a strong impression and had a straightforward, serious personality. The girl was Endo-san from class committee.

"Indeed. Today's the due date for classics homework submission. You still haven't handed it in have you, I came to check up on it."

"Shun, help me out!"

"...Takumi. Geez, I have submitted my homework already so I can't show you, but I'll teach you."

"All right! I'll submit it on the next break."

"Why then."

"If I deliver it to the staff room after school, I'll lose that much of my gaming time."

"Geez, you really are..."

When I sighed hearing Takumi's answer, Endo-san laughed quietly and said "Thank you for the work Shun-kun" to me.

"Really. How can you two be best friends despite having completely different personalities."

"Ah, I think it's strange as well."

"Well, despite what he says, it's 'cause Shun's caring."

"I don't want to hear that from you."

I complained to Takumi who relied on me, and Endo-san agreed with him, saying "You're right".

"It's great to have Shun-kun. If not for him, I would have to watch over Takumi-kun until he finishes his homework."

In those cases, as long as I tell Shun-kun, he'll make sure it's done even if he has to use force, it's a great help. She said, but I could only respond with a wry laughter.

"Come on, Shun. We've finished eating so teach me!"

"Yes yes, wait a moment."

I looked as Takumi has pulled out his homework. I checked what he didn't know and what did he have trouble with, I intended to have him solve as much as possible on his own. I casually taught him what he didn't know. And, what suddenly entered my line of sight was Endo-san who watched over Takumi.

Her eyes behind the pair of glasses were narrowed as she made a serious expression. Except for the sound of Takumi writing notes, the place was very silent and the ambient sounds felt very distant.

"....."

"...Endo-san?"

"Seems like he started on it properly. Now then, I leave the rest to you."

After confirming Takumi had started to do his homework, with a light feeling Endo-san moved away from their seats. Because of the serious expression she made as she stared at Takumi, I was confused by the change.

"Shun. Teach me this next."

"Y-yeah..."

Embracing a hazy feeling for some reason, I helped Takumi do his homework. Just as he declared, he submitted his homework by the end of the afternoon break and hurried back home.

"Good grief, leaving his best friend behind huh. Well, it can't be helped since I have to do some shopping for dinner. What should I make tonight?"

As I bought ingredients in the supermarket, Endo-san's serious expression crossed through my mind.

She calls out to Takumi a lot and often takes care of him. Although that's the role of a class committee member, it can't be that——

"It can't be that Endo-san..."

Likes Takumi? No, no way. Nope. Smiling wryly to myself I finished shopping and went home.

I put away the ingredients and headed towards my room without hesitation.

I put on the VR Gear placed next to the bed, laid down on the bed, closed my eyes and logged in.

•

"Thanks to everyone's efforts, we have safely completed the 【Crafting Guild】's guild hall. The guild has been established as well and all that's left is to start its operations, but before that, let's make it grand! ——Cheers!"

" " "***——Cheers!***" " "

Currently, I was in the interior of a building with an open hall and lined up counters, there were a lot of tables available and on them, were arranged a variety of dishes and sweets.

This place was the base of the 【Crafting Guild】, called Guild Hall. It's appearance was that of a three-story building that had more than twice the size of the buildings surrounding it. Pillars and signs were painted red and stood out. But the reason it attracted attention was the inside of it.

The guild room's subspace extended to the maximum, and it was twice as big as it appeared to be, currently, this place has attracted a considerable amount of crafters.

"Among them there are working NPCs trading materials, aren't there."

It still hasn't started to run in earnest, but it already allows easy purchasing of items and two-way distribution of materials, it acts as a proxy agency for selling items from crafters——that's the 【Crafting Guild】.

Other than that, there are plans to provide support to those without any crafting facilities, encouraging joint crafting, and crafting experience corner.

And right now, I was looking down on the happily-chatting players from the terrace on the second floor.

"Yun-kun, how was it? My leading there, that is."

When I turned around from the terrace towards the source of the voice, I saw a familiar person there.

"I saw it perfectly fine, Magi-san. It was quite dignified. Still, is it really fine to invite me? I'm an outsider."

"It's all right. Most of the people here are outsiders. But, if there is a common point between us... then it would be that you're also the co-founder."

I listened to what Magi-san said and responded with "I see, I'll be at ease then". Today, I was invited to the party in the evening hours, "participate by all means", for which in exchange I presented with these words.

"Thank you very much for inviting me today. And——for establishment of the【Crafting Guild】 and your inauguration as the guild master, congratulations."

"Thanks, Yun-kun. But really, how did this happen? Cloude is the sub-master, I'll push all the work on him anyway."

Magi-san laughed, in response I said "Isn't that fine?", agreeing.

"Yahoo, Yuncchi. I greeted everyone and came."

Seeing me and Magi-san talk, Lyly has approached us.

"Oh, you came too, Lyly. What about Cloude?"

"Kurocchi is going around greeting and listening to reports of other crafters. It was planned that we talk about even during the party. So after we did our rounds, we came over to you, Yuncchi."

Cloude sure is doing well, I muttered. As I thought, Cloude seemed to be more capable as a guild master. I felt that way but——

"Well, rather than someone arrogant like Cloude, someone striking and bright like Magi-san makes it easier to accept."

"Ahh, I get it. Kurocchi is the shadow ruler, something like a chief of staff."

"Indeed indeed. 'Just as planned' or 'in the end Magi is merely a puppet', 'I'm the true ruler of this guild!'. That's something he'd say. In the end, I'm just a puppet huh."

Magi-san muttered that strangely serious. In response to that joke, Lyly and I let out a small sigh. It was way too easy to imagine Cloude take a theatrical pose and say that.

"Well, let's leave it at this for introductions."

"Then, you must have errands to do other than introductions don't you."

"Ah, you can tell huh."

When I said that, the two got onto the main topic immediately.

"I think it must have reached your ears already, Yun-kun. The talk about the event."

"Yes. You mean the event organized by the【Crafting Guild】 that's supposed to take two days, right."

It serves as a promotion and anniversary event for the 【Crafting Guild】, a grand-scale scheduled event.

Offering various items, holding an auction in the guild hall and so on. Other than that there's supposed to be a stage show and a PvP event.

"Yup yup. So, in order to liven up the event, we thought of asking Yuncchi if there are any interesting items to use."

"Interesting items..."

"Yup. Yuncchi who has a 【Making Box】 seems like she'd have some unusual items."

Just as Lyly said, I had some materials and recipes that were lacking in practicality, but I couldn't tell whether they are interesting or not.

"Hmm, interesting materials or items huh. That'd be drugs causing abnormal status and poison. Also, from the recipes there is 【Insect Repelling Incense】, 【Cannibalistic Elixir】, 【Hair Growth Elixir】 and... 【Charm Fragrance】 I guess."

"Abnormal state drugs are quite generic aren't they. Hey, eh? Magicchi, your face is red."

"Ehh?! Ah, mm. It's nothing!"

As Magi-san blushed, knowing the reason I felt somewhat awkward.

It's about what happened the other day.

Together with Myu I have performed experiments with unknown materials. Unlike myself who is careful, I was actively encouraged by Myu, and during the experiment with the potion I made——

After using multiple potions, we couldn't see any effect strong enough to affect my consciousness, when I drank the last drug, a change has occurred.

——*ba-dump*. My heart started to beat incredibly strong. My entire body has started to heat up, and I have squatted down on spot.

“Onee-chan?!"

"Haa, haa... it's okay. But, something…"

my consciousness became ambiguous, Myu grabbed my shoulder to support me. In the menu, the bad status 【Charmed】 was displayed. So the last drug, was a bad status inducing one... as I care freely considered that, a change in Myu in front of me has occurred.

"O-Onee-chan. Somehow, I'm feeling strange! W-what is this!"

Myu's eyes were tinged with seriousness, she put some strength into the arms grabbing my shoulders and pushed me down on the floor.

"Wai... what?!"

"I wonder? I'm also... 【Charmed】? I can't stop."

As we were, Myu hunched over as if riding me and she repeatedly breathed shallowly. Somehow, I started to feel incredible danger.

And like that, we caused Magi-san to misunderstand, I resolved it on the next day. Probably, she still hadn't digested that memory well enough yet. I didn't want to recall it either, so I proceeded with the story.

"From the recipes I can use, it's just the two first ones."

The 【Insect Repelling Incense】, just as its name suggested repelled insect-type mobs and 【Cannibalistic Elixir】 was a mix of various foods that increased stats for about thirty minutes and increased the speed at which satiety was being depleted.

"And, that's about it."

"Is that so. 【Insect Repelling Incense】 sounds interesting."

"Does it? If 【Cannibalistic Elixir】's effect was adjusted it could be more hardcore."

Although her face was still slightly red, since Magi-san asked about it, I explained the effect of the【Cannibalistic Elixir】.

The setting of the 【Cannibalistic Elixir】 was that it formulated a drug inside the user's body and turned the food into energy at high efficiency, explosively increasing strength.

Something like that.

Certainly it increased the stats. However, if the mixed ratio is wrong, the speed at which satiety is reduced increased to an unprecedented level, and unless the user continues to eat until the elixir's effect expires they will starve to death.

"In other words, if the satiety reduction effect is maximized, one would turn into an eating machine."

"Uwahh... that's nastier than poison. Yuncchi, what a horrible item you have there."

"Is it now. But, I really do want to avoid using it."

"I think so too. It's a dangerous item. It's too early to give ordinary players such a thing."

With our opinions matching, we have decided not to use the 【Cannibalistic Elixir】.

In that case, the only recipe I could reproduce was 【Insect Repelling Incense】. But Lyly seemed to have come up with an idea and he smiled joyfully.

"Still, with just 【Insect Repelling Incense】 we can prepare some interesting events. Yup, I'll go consult it with Kurocchi."

He said so, and without telling us what his idea was Lyly ran away. We looked at his back as he left.

"There he went, that Lyly."

"Indeed. Then, I'll excuse myself as well."

"Eh?! But the party has just started."

"I thought of coming and showing my face after being invited and congratulate you all. I have to prepare dinner now."

"Ah, I see. You're Myu-chan's onee-chan after all, aren't you."

I said, I'm a man. Is what I wanted to repeat like I usually did, but it can't be helped. I convinced myself.

"If that's the case, thank you for coming today."

"No, I'm glad I could talk to you."

After exchanging our greetings, Magi-san went back to greet other crafters. Seeing her off, I logged out.

Chapter 1 - Wetlands and the Darkman

The 【Atelier】 was a small shop located in the south of First Town, it dealt with potions and recovery items as well as food items like sandwiches.

And, in the back of the store there was a small field, various kinds of herbs were cultivated there.

"Kyouko-san, how was today's harvest?"

"Since the herbs are now available, their cultivation was stopped. Instead, the materials from the 【Making Box】, poisonous plants, material for High pots and MP Potions are grown evenly."

"I see, thank you. We have a large stock of herbs now so there's no problem. For the time being, I want to increase the amount of materials that have come out from the Making Box before going back to the original cultivation."

Kyouko-san the NPC made a charming smile and went back to work. I looked from behind as she's working, then moved to the workshop part of the 【Atelier】.

Recently, I've been using the 【Linguistics】 Sense to gather crafting recipes and have noted down a number of recipes.

While looking at the item recipes and the materials required, I murmured.

"As I thought, there is a limited amount of materials I can get in the current situation. Waiting for other players to bring them in is one thing, but if possible, I want to find some myself."

Since I walked around the fields gathering materials when I started playing OSO, those feelings were strong in me.

"Also, in the place I want to go to now, there's lots of interesting mobs. I want to go to the town that's located a bit further."

I tried organizing my goals, it would be material collection, find new mobs and reaching the new town. Three goals. If I learn about the area, I'll know which enemies I should be wary of and will roughly know how do my prospects stand. In other words, there was a worth doing a preview visit before going there solo.

And for that, I'll expand on the method I have previously used.

"Yun-oneechan, we're here!"

"Geez, why don't you just call me normally."

Making a small, wry smile, I stopped organizing the materials and returned to Atelier's store part. There, was waiting Myu who called me earlier and her party.

"Sorry about this. I decided to resort to rely on you again."

"Please do not mind it. We're getting a proper reward after all."

Lucato answered me with a smile.

In order to go to the Second Town, I have formed a party with Myu and the others and broke through the boss on the east side, the Blade Lizard. Back then, we got involved in some trouble and I have ended up fighting the boss, but basically, I have defeated the boss by being temporarily carried by Myu's party.

"Is assortment of High-pots and MP Potions similar to the one you got last time really fine?"

"Yes. Since our party is in combat very often, we're always short on those."

Since Lucato said that like it's a trivial thing, I smiled bitterly. To make a partial down payment, and to provide the items required for combat, I passed recovery items to her starting with High Potions.

"...since Yun-san's name is becoming famous recently, wasn't there a different method of getting past other than relying on us?"

The one who spoke to me while I was making a business-like exchange with Lucato was Toutobi, who took on the role of a scout in the party. Seeing her somewhat anxious, I tilted my head puzzled.

"A different method?"

"See, Yun-san is well-acquainted with Magi-san, Cloude-san and the others right? Isn't it possible for you to get a better escort thanks to those connections than we can provide?"

"Ahh, that."

Hino provided a supplementary explanation as Toutobi was a person of few words.

Certainly, it was possible to form a battalion of multiple parties and a number of crafters could be escorted at the same time.

While avoiding the joint struggle penalty, they would divide into the parties taking care of small fries and anti-boss specialized party, parties specializing in healing from outside of the party and so on. There were multiple merits in that kind of assistance and one could be safely transported.

However, there were also demerits.

"Hmm. Somehow, that kind of things doesn't fit me at all."

"...doesn't fit you?"

Toutobi who furrowed her eyebrows anxiously made a stunned expression. For some reason, that expression of hers looked lovely and funny, causing me to quietly laugh.

"Indeed. Preparing such escort requires preparations, considerable planning and it's time constrained right? Also, a large amount of money is required for the reward. Well, that's an expanse shared by the crafters participating though."

"...is that so."

"And there's one more, most important reason of mine."

When I said 'most important', everyone has shown interest in the details of it. But, it wasn't that serious a reason. It was a simple matter of my hobbies.

"Being stuck in a huge crowd isn't too pleasant is it? I'm fine leisurely taking my time."

"Fufufu, that thinking is very like you, Yun-san. I really like that kind of thing."

"Indeedly. As I've been thinkin', as sisters with Myu it ain't no wonder ya too are bit air-headed as well."

In response to Rirei's and Kohaku's reaction I felt like complaining 'where do you see me being an airhead'. However, if we continued to talk here, we'd never go out for an adventure.

"Yes yes. Now then, about time we moved. Yun-san, it's fine if the destination are the wetlands right?"

Lucato found a timing on her own and spoke to me. It was about the time where we almost forgot the original goal. Reflecting on it, I said to everyone.

"The goal is the south of First Town, the wetlands. Well, since it's very close the Atelier, we can go there leisurely."

Accepting the objective, we formed a party for the adventure. Last time, Rirei has remained outside of the party and acted as my escort, but this time the eyes of the party - Toutobi has been planned to be outside.

I took a glance at the plains spread outside of the first town as we moved, they were filled with non-active herbivorous mobs, soon enough we have arrived at the entrance to the wetlands.

"Now then, I'll concentrate on searching for the enemy. Please be careful, Yun-san."

"Got it."

"Well then, Tobi-chan, do your best."

Myu waved her hand towards Toutobi who went ahead alone to confirm our safety, seeing her off. I was told by Toutobi to be careful of surroundings as well but...

"...for some reason, I feel something like multiple gazes on us."

It wasn't clear where it came from, but I certainly could feel it. Since it was a very inorganic gaze that struck me, it didn't feel like we would be immediately assaulted, but I couldn't see enemy mobs clearly.

"Mobs in here are very harsh in many ways."

"Three, at one o'clock."

Toutobi came back and at the same time she briefly relayed the info before going back there. When we proceeded relying on those words, certainly, in the direction specified by Toutobi my 【Discovery】 could sense something.

Immediately after that, something has popped out of the ground. Lucato swung down the sword she had tied to her waist. Also, Rirei created a pillar of fire on the wetlands covered thinly with water.

The water has evaporated in an instant, the firepower making the ground dry has left me stunned, but from the traces of the burns there were particles of light scattering as a proof the mobs have been erased.

"W-what?!"

"Ah, they have reacted to us approaching haven't they. Yun-san, were you able to react?"

"N-no. I couldn't. Was there something in? How much of it?"

"Yun-oneechan, is your sense level low? Or maybe you didn't raise them?"

Having it pointed out by Myu, I opened the sense status menu to confirm.

Some of the Senses could grow or be derived from.

"I took two new ones."

First, since my 【Bow】 Sense reached 30, a derivation of a Bow-type Sense was possible. Since 【Black Maiden's Longbow】 is my weapon, just as the name suggested, it's been classified as a long bow, thus I have consumed two SP to get the 【Longbow】 Sense.

And, at the level 30 the 【Discovery】 Sense could be grown into a higher Sense that is 【See-Through】. In this case, although the original Sense disappeared, it was possible to obtain an even stronger passive effect, it consumed the same amount of SP as picking up the 【Longbow】 Sense.

Possessed SP21

【Bow Lv31】【Longbow Lv1】【Hawk Eyes Lv42】【Speed Increase Lv23】
【See-Through Lv1】【Magic Talent Lv42】【Magic Power Lv45】
【Enchant Arts Lv18】【Dosing Lv24】【Earth Element Talent Lv14】

Unequipped:

【Alchemy Lv30】【Synthesis Lv30】【Engraving Lv1】
【Swimming Lv13】【Crafting Knowledge Lv32】【Taming Lv6】
【Linguistics Lv15】【Cooking Lv21】

I organized the Senses again, then told Myu and the others how does it look like.

"Two Senses at level 1 huh. In that case the stats must be much lower. What to do..."

Myu made an evaluation, but since 【Discovery】 has grown into 【See-Through】 I was able to find mobs and hidden mining points I haven't been able to before so I was satisfied. Field work was fun because I was able to make such discoveries.

"Hey, Yun-oneechan, are you listening? Come on..."

"It's fine, Myu. Yun-san must be thinking about lots of things now."

Since Myu looked appalled with a hand on her hip, Hino appeased her.

Once again the scout, Toutobi returned and conveyed new information.

"Ahead of here there's a Treant. What do we do?"

"A Treant huh, since Yun-oneechan is here let's pass this time."

"Yes, you're right."

After hearing Toutobi's report Myu judged to do so and Lucato has agreed with her. However, on the other hand there was also a different opinion.

"Wait me a secon'! Treants are cumbersome' mobs to find! 't might be an accident but it's better to take it down if foun'! Definitely!"

"Fufufu, the material dropping from it is very useful for us mages. If possible I'd like to secure it."

Myu and Lucato were for avoiding it while Kohaku and Rirei were in favour of defeating it.

"Umm... what to do, Tobi-chan."

"...I wonder."

Hino and Toutobi, unable to make a judgement made troubled expressions. But before that...

"Umm... what kind of mob is a Treant?"

Earlier, I was unable to confirm how the mentioned new mob looked like and had no idea what to do about it. I wanted some objective information to know whether I should defeat it or avoid it instead.

"Onee-chan, the Treant mob is said to be a 'strong mob' type of enemy."

In the game, there are mobs that are stronger than some of the weaker boss mobs, they cause some nasty bad statuses, use special attacks, or are collectives of strong small fries. They're usually called 'strong mobs' and 'strong small fries'.

"And so, this Treant——pure stats-wise it's stronger than the wetlands' boss mob, it uses attacks that aim at the vital points, often killing people with one hit. It's an exemplary mob of the wetlands."

"...also, Treants are mimicking the appearance of a tree. Since they're waiting for players to come into their attack range, a considerably high level detection Sense is required."

Toutobi supplemented Myu's description. Everyone stared at my face, the decision on the Treant's matter has been shifted to me, the escort target.

Although I thought that there's no need to risk it, on the other hand I was interested in the Treant. As a compromise for the both sides——

"——Even if I'm not fighting it, I can take a look at it."

I proposed, 'we didn't think of that at all' they made wry smiles suggesting that.

"And then, Yun-san who went to take a look will be suspended in the air by Treant's vines, that immodest appearance——"You! Cut 't out an' shaddup! Any more an' it'll turn hazardous!"——"

Kohaku approached Rirei from the side and held her mouth to silence her. She sure has practice in that, even though I felt so, I was really scared of hearing what kind of appearance of mine Rirei had in her head.

"...let's leave Rirei and Kohaku for now. If it's Yun-san, I think you will be able to watch from here."

"Tobi-chan, cruel! Why are ya lumpin' me together wit' Rirei!"

Treated as a set with Rirei because of their comedic act, Kohaku raised a voice of protest, but was ignored by everyone.

They're quite accustomed to it, I thought while staring at what Toutobi was pointing to.

Thanks to the far-sight of 【Hawk Eyes】 I found a single tree. A single old tree with roots in the wetlands. Other than that, there was nothing strange about its appearance. The 【See-Through】 Sense I obtained a moment ago delivered a feeble response suggesting it's a mob, but it was very close to that of a collection point.

"It practically looks like a tree."

"...that's the Treant's mimicry's effect. It's real appearance shows only during combat."

Hearing that description I was satisfied. I didn't want to risk by approaching it out of curiosity.

"Sorry. This time, let's take a route on which we won't have to fight a Treant please."

"Fufufu, it can't be helped this time. However, I'm satisfied by seeing a beautiful girl like Yun-san make an apologetic expression."

"Give't up already, Rirei! Well, can't be helped this time."

The two consented and we have proceeded further, avoiding the Treant.

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"So these are this area's mobs."

By now, from the mobs I saw in the wetlands to the south, with exception of the Treant at which I sneaked a peek, are Moor Frog mobs, low viscosity Mould Slime, a slime-type mob, and a mob called 'balls of fire' or 'souls' - the Will-o'-Wisp.

The figures of the mobs I couldn't see before with 【Discovery】 Sense despite getting a reaction from it were lurking under the leaves and lotus-like plants, in the swamp's mud and attacked when a player approached.

After the Treant, it seemed like Moor Frogs also attacked from surprise, but since they appear in groups once you attack one of them the linked mobs in the surroundings will also attack you.

Unlike the Treant, their numbers were large but they also were quite nasty. However, other mobs than that like the Mould Slime and Will-o'-Wisp weren't as high a threat. Rather, they could be ignored.

"If I avoid Treants and Moor Frogs, I can move around well enough alone can't I."

"Indeed. Here, let's engage in combat for once to experience the Moor Frog's strength."

"Earlier, we wiped them out with a single hit, so let's leave some for Yun-san this time."

Rirei who evaporated a whole herd of Moor Frogs that flocked to us with a pillar of fire. She was an excellent firepower-specialized mage.

"Fufufu, Yun-san, what is it? Staring at me so much. No way, you're inviting me?"

"As if I would."

I stared at Rirei. If only she didn't act like this, I sighed and turned to look at the swarm of Moor Frogs nearby.

Since my bow's range was greater than the enemy's attack range I could safely deliver the first attack. After that, I left all mobs other than the one I attacked to Myu and the others.

"Let's go then."

After I finished my preparations, everyone returned a nod. I held the bow and pulled back the string. I fixed my aim at the frog that was hiding behind the leaves of a lotus and was easy to target, then shoot an arrow.

The arrow released from the bow raised quite high before drawing a parabola and piercing the point I aimed for. The arrow pierced the lotus leafs and ripples spread through the water the wetlands were covered with.

"——《Fire Shot》"

"——《Quick Blast》"

At the same time as the wave of frogs in front has jumped, Rirei and Kohaku used beginner's magic to reduce their number.

After a slight delay Myu also took down one frog that landed on the ground with a ray of light from the spell 《Sol Ray》.

"Make sure to fight as to leave some for Yun-san."

"I know!"

At the same time as Lucato called out, Myu and Hino approached the frogs.

Retaining the movement momentum, Hino poised the spear to the side, pierced the frog and lifted it up. After lifting it, she realized it still had HP remaining and swung the spear, slamming the frog into the tree and defeating it.

Myu's movements were very detailed, she approached the Moor Frogs without letting them aim at her and finished them off in an instant.

"Just like that, the flock was reduced to a half... no, to three frogs huh."

Right in front of me the frogs were taken down one after another.

Even as the frog's long tongues attacked her from the blind spots, Myu avoided them by sinking her body low and not even having to fight back, showing how to fight safely.

In the end, what remained was a single Moor Frog left for me to practice on.

Myu and Hino have moved closer to me ready to help out any time with their weapons drawn.

Without being distracted from the remaining Moor Frog, I set up the bow.

My stare was returned by the amphibian's peculiar large and cold eyes, causing me to feel a pressure. However, I couldn't pull back here.

"It's okay! It's weak as long as you deal with it calmly!"

Hearing Myu's cheering, I took a deep breath.

And, the one who moved first, was the Moor Frog. It stretched its limbs making a powerful jump, going higher than my height was, its body closing on to me.

"——《Rapid Fire Bow ・Second Form》!"

I used a bow-type Sense Art, shooting an arrow at the frog that had no way to escape in mid-air. As the frog didn't fall down even with it's soft abdomen was pierced with two arrows, I immediately moved, taking distance from its landing point.

I moved as to get behind the frog if possible. After observing Myu and the others fight, I learned that if I move behind it immediately after it jumps it cannot immediately use its long tongue attack.

They had no choice but to turn around. By utilizing the time I bought I shoot an arrow.

After being hit by two in the belly and the third arrow on its back, the Moor Frog has created a small water bullet.

Since the frog has a very little HP left I decided to cut down the rest of it before it attacks. But——

"——Damn."

The moment I missed the very last arrow, I received the stray water bullet.

After it finished turning around, The Moor Frog jumped high in order to hit me with its body.

This time I shoot an arrow with a perfect timing as not to miss and cut down the last of Moor Frog's HP which has turned into particles of light in mid-air and disappeared.

"Onee-chan, are you okay? ——《Heal》"

"You're exaggerating. It wasn't that strong of an attack."

Worried, Myu has clung to me and started to touch me to ascertain my safety, but Moor Frog's attack wasn't that much of a threat. I understand that what was really scary, was having an entire flock attacks centered on you, I was grateful to others for reducing their number first.

"How did it feel now that you tried fighting it?"

"Lucato, well, I can win if it's 1 versus 1. Any more than that and I'll run. Absolutely impossible."

"Was it a good warm-up? Now then, let's go to the boss. It's all right. There'll be no problem if we fight normally."

In accordance to Lucato's words, we headed to challenge the boss of the wetlands.

Other than some combat for my training, we took a route avoiding mobs, aiming for the direction boss was in.

Fighting only with a few mobs, we have arrived in front of the boss mob, the Darkman.

『Daaaaark』

"...that's quite an unique boss mob."

To describe the boss, Darkman's appearance, one could would say it's a shadow with mass.

Occasionally its irregular mass made up a humanoid appearance before turning back into shadow with mass once again, which happened repeatedly. I don't know where did it have vocal cords, but the mass spoke 『Daark』 with a very difficult to understand voice, and was without a doubt the Darkman.

"It's coming! This time Tobi-san isn't participating in combat and will stick out until the objective is complete! Top priority is Yun-san's survival!"

"Luka-chan. We just have to take it down, right!"

"Myu-san, you never change do you."

Lucato smiled wryly in response to Myu's remark and pulled out the sword that was pointing into the back. Larger than an one-handed sword, and kinda small for a

two-handed sword——she set up the sword classified as a Bastard Sword right in front of her.

Rather than use a heavy weapon like a sledgehammer, Hino used a long spear. Rirei and Kohaku held their staffs as they stared straight at the boss.

"The boss is moving."

As if waiting until our preparations are complete, the Darkman begun to move. It created an irregular shadow shaped like an adult man and its arm has begun to melt.

"Let's take initiative——《Wind Cutter》！"

First, Kohaku fired a blade of wind towards the melting Darkman. The ground was gouged out and a mass of moist soil has scattered, blown in all directions. The Darkman stretched on the spot and jumped onto a nearby tree, then rebuilt its shadow body and looked down towards us.

"Na' good. Opener failed."

"It can't be helped. Now then, what do we do about the one in front of us."

"In front?"

Hearing the words of Rirei who comforted Kohaku, I was puzzled. My line of sight was focused on the Darkman that jumped up now turned towards the place Kohaku

aimed to, and saw the shadow arms disconnected from the Darkman's body. The defeated mobs and cut off parts of the bodies normally turned into light particles and disappeared, but the mass of shadow has began to change shape.

"...something is wriggling there."

"Darkman makes off-shots out of its own body parts."

As Lucato calmly explained, the Darkman that jumped on top of the tree once again disconnected a part of its body, creating a new one.

plop, *plop*, the parts fell down and formed an same humanoid shape with the same size as the main body.

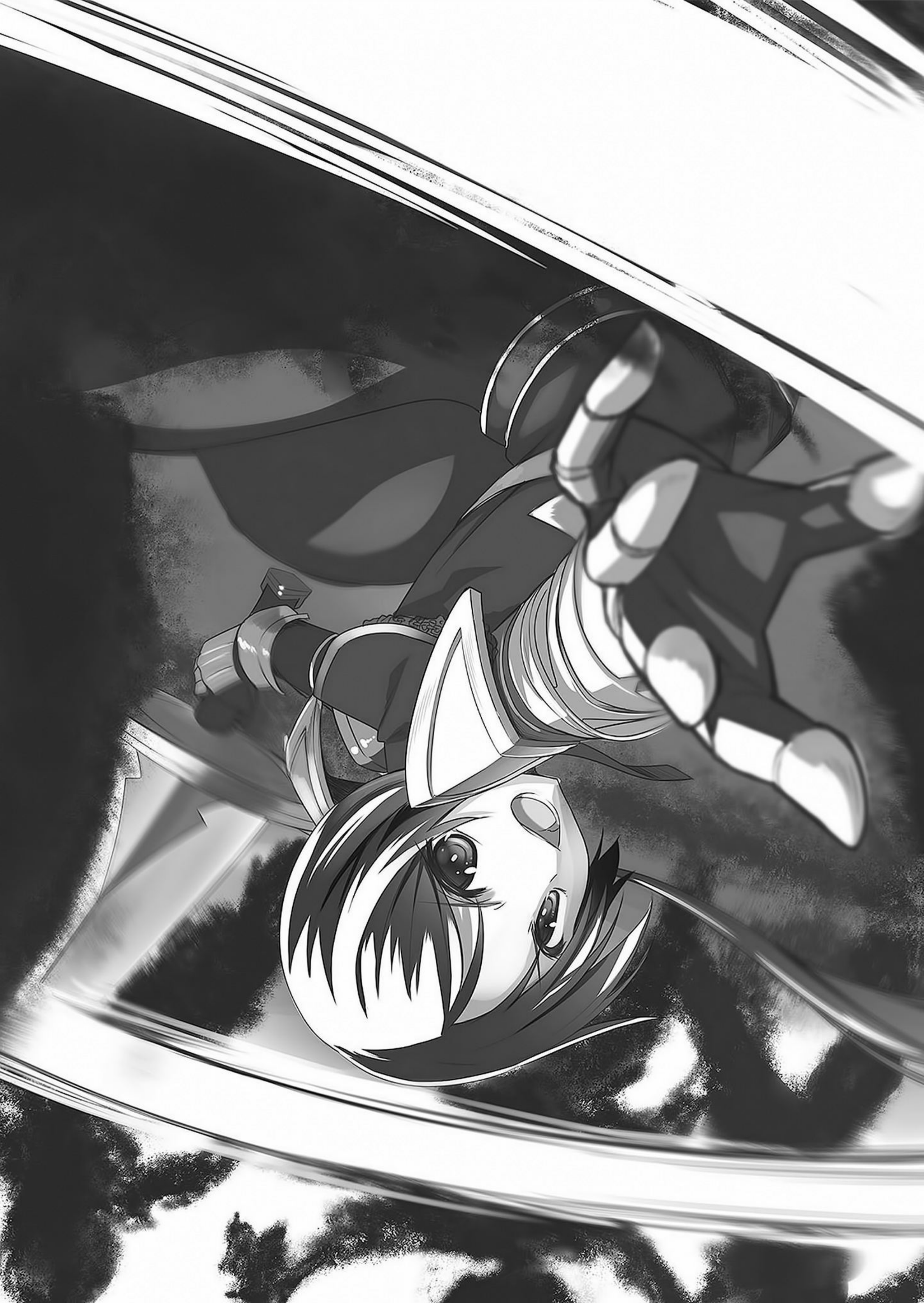
"The off-shots have the same stats as the main body, except for HP. Also, each of them wields a different weapon."

Immediately after Lucato spoke and Hino provided supplementary information, the third off-shot has stretched its shadow arms and after making a long spear it thrust in our direction. Hino parried its spear with her own and pierced the abdomen of the off-shot.

"Weak..."

"Even if they're weak one on one, they're a pain when there many of them, ha!"

Lucato swung her bastard sword sideways, cutting three off-shots at the same time. However, the Darkman in the back created new off-shots one after another which soon have surrounded us.



Sword, hammer, shield, dagger, short bow, club, large axe. The off-shots that have created various weapons were cut apart with Lucato's bastard sword, Hino also used the long reach of her weapon, swinging strongly to blow away entire groups on the field.

"Fufufu, we can't lose to them now, can we."

"Indeedly, lez' match ourselves and finish it perfect!"

"Let's go. ——《Flame Circle》!"

"——《Little Tornado》!"

A converging circle of flame has swallowed off-shots and its power was given a momentum by the tornado Kohaku has produced, evaporating a number of off-shots on the field in its wake.

"I see it! ——《Sol Ray》!"

Unable to keep up with the speed of the battle that has unfolded, I just stood in the centre being protected.

Myu has released converged rays of light through the gap that was made after the flame whirlwind hit, trying to hit the main body, but using its high speed the main body managed to hide among the off-shots that looked exactly the same and scattered in all directions.

"What a pity! Come on, Yun-oneechan too, help out!"

"?!! 《Enchant》——Defense!"

This time's objective was to make sure I don't die before reaching next town.

That's why this time I prioritized a defense enchant on myself before setting up the bow and shooting at the off-shots.

"Which one should I aim for?!"

"Please prioritize ones doing long range attacks!"

"Roger!"

Following Lucato's instructions, I aimed between the vanguard off-shots at the off-shot in the back that was throwing arrows and daggers.

Although they didn't fall with just one hit like they did when Lucato and Hino did it, but after being hit by four arrows the off-shot melted and disappeared. I used MP recovery items on Rirei and Kohaku who were running dry and once again applied enchants, the two way battle didn't go either way. In the first place, the reason for that was because the Darkman's main body was hiding among the off-shots and we were stuck in a situation where we couldn't find it.

"Hey, how did you take it down before?"

"Back then——Luka-chan and Hino-chan suppressed the off-shots, Rirei and Kohaku took down the ranged ones, and we didn't find the boss until Tobi-chan and I did a pincer attack."

While explaining that, she cut one off-shot with the one-handed sword and aimed her free hand in opposite direction, shooting a converged ray of light to pierce two off-shots at once.

"So we are short on attack power because I'm here, huh."

"There's that but... Tobi-chan, can you see it?"

Although Toutobi was detached herself from the battlefield, she seemed to have been observing it from the top of a nearby tree and turned around when Myu called her.

"...at eleven o'clock there are signs of off-shot creation! The Darkman is there!"

"Kohaku! Rirei!"

"Fufufu, I know. ——《Flame Circle》."

"——《Little Tornado》!"

The two's combined skill exploded and a violent heat wave has come from the direction Toutobi has pointed to. Responding to it, the off-shots moved to create a protective wall, but Lucato and Hino wouldn't let them escape.

"I won't let you. ——《Multistage Thrust》!"

"——《Shock Impact》!"

The two secured the path to the boss, and Myu dove in there. I applied enchants looking at her back.

"《Enchant》——Attack, Speed!"

"Thanks! Now, don't run this time!"

Ahead of the firestorm that has cleared up, there was the Darkman all alone, as if to run away from Myu its shadow lower body slid on the ground.

"I won't let you runn!"

Although Myu's sword closed on it with a tremendous speed, the Darkman didn't lose when it comes to speed. It changed its arm forming a lance and has defended itself from the attack by parrying.

On the other hand, part of its body melted generating new off-shots that have headed towards us.

"Stand firm again! We need to hold out in here!"

As Lucato commanded, I once again applied defense enchants and we confronted the off-shots coming at us. Thrusting with spear, cleaving with the sword, baking them with magic and carving. My arrows also have pierced and were sucked into the enemies' foreheads.

As for Myu, her already high speed has been increased by the speed stat-increasing enchant and has gradually overwhelmed the Darkman. Being dealt damage bit by bit, it's HP was reduced to about 30%.

"It's over! ——《Fifth Breaker》！"

Myu swung up the sword that emitted a light of the art and was about to release the deadly attack. However——

"...it's time. It escaped."

The voice of Toutobi who was away from the battlefield so that we avoid the joint struggle penalty has sounded in my ears. Both the Darkman's body and the off-shots have collapsed, melting in front of us and disappeared, sucked into the ground.

Myu's first attack has cut through the air and the art was immediately cancelled.

"No way, it escaped?!"

The moment she thought she would cut it down, Myu received a shock from not being able to defeat it.

"Hey, what was that?"

"The battle with the Darkman has a time limit. Actually, withstanding until the time limit counts as a clear, but we don't get any drops."

While watching Toutobi comfort Myu who chagrined, Lucato described the specifics of the battle.

Certainly, just a little more and we would have taken it down, having it escape at that point was really frustrating.

"One more time! Let's do it one more time!"

"We can't. We need to guide Yun-san to the next town."

Lucato dragged Myu away who was obsessed with the boss battle. This too felt like something everyone was used to, I turned towards the direction boss was originally in.

After walking for a while, I saw the end of the wetlands on the south.

"This is the fourth town——also known as 【Maze Town】."

What spread in front of me, was an outer wall that had a very south-eastern Asia's-based feel to it.

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Drawn on town's gate there was a very characteristic pattern, the town overflowed with moisture and oriental patterns were drawn on the buildings, matching those drawn on the gate.

After entering the main street I could immediately see the object that functioned as transition portal, I touched it and registered a transition point.

"In the city's bounds, there are four entrances to the dungeons. It's called the 【Maze Town】 because it has dungeons inside."

While listening to Lucato's explanations, I was guided to the city's key locations.

Right beside the portal that was in the town centre, there was a spire-like building that was supposedly a dungeon.

There was a cave-type dungeon near the First Town and on the outskirts of the Third Town there was a mine-based dungeon. But the dungeons of the Maze Town were of a completely different type.

While the former have assumed forms conforming to the area, the Maze Town's dungeons were expanded in the subspace.

Their entrances were four large buildings, but their contents differed for each of them.

The first one was a normal dungeon with stone walls that was intensive when it comes to attack causing bad statuses.

The second one was a dim underground cave dungeon with poor footing that had a lot of fighter and water attribute mobs.

The third one was a horror dungeon with dark space, complex terrain and dominated by undead mobs.

The final one, was a yet-unreleased dungeon that is to be released with an update.

"The dungeon in the centre of the town is the main hunting ground. There are areas spread in all directions from the town, but outside is overflowing with strong, high level enemies. Even the progression-oriented and min-maxers don't set a single foot outside."

"Hee, dungeons in the unexplored and wild area huh. It sure sounds like a fun town."

I feel like taking a peek outside, collecting items in the entrance's vicinity and escaping if needed would work.

"Onee-chan, just now you thought of snatching some material without fighting, haven't you."

"...can't I?"

"Not only you can't, but there were other players before you who thought the same and had little success, isn't it more constructive to give up on that and raise your own Sense level?"

Well, I guess. Avoiding strong mobs without defeating them and obtaining items would be difficult.

Even if I obtained some materials, it would be at most one or two before dying and coming back to town with a death penalty. It wasn't worth it.

"Can't be helped. I'll give up."

"Yun-san, you're really actually fired up about going at it, aren't you. An unexpected challenger."

Ahahaha, Lucato and the others laughed with small grimace. Myu looked shocked and said "Onee-chan is really crooked at times" and sighed.

"Well, let's leave it at that, what do we do next? At this rate we'll dissolve party, that sounds really dull."

Hino asked in order to change the topic. I have achieved my objective after registering the portal in the Maze Town, so I didn't have any problem with disbanding.

"Let's have revenge on the Darkman! This time we'll take it down!"

"Let's take down that Treant we let off! Grade up the staffs with Treant's material!"

Myu and Rirei raised their voices. Moreover, Toutobi who was outside of the party this time sent me multiple glances full of expectations.

"Since we achieved Yun-san's goal, how about we hunt as we go back. Yun-san how about you come with us?"

"Is that fine?"

"Just like this time, we'll escort you in the future as well. In that case, we might team up together to practice."

"If that's the case, then there's something I'd like to ask. Since I haven't raised my combat Senses too much, can we do some leveling as well?"

"Yayy! Then, we'll have Onee-chan enter and try all the patterns by fighting Darkman five times more."

Surprised by what Myu suddenly said, I froze.

No way, are we fighting that boss again and repeatedly too?!

"Let's go then! Let's go right now!"

"Fufufu, you're right. The Treant is going to escape. It would be nice if it remained in the same spot as before."

In addition to fighting the Darkman we're to chase down the Treant?! I was swept away with the flow straight towards the wetlands.

In order to fight the boss, Darkman that turned inactive earlier, Myu party's members rotated and we challenged it to five consecutive battles. We have grasped the flow of the battle more or less, but out of five tries it escaped twice and three times we were able to beat it on the verge of the time limit.

After defeating it three times, all that dropped for me was a material 【Magical Organism's Catalyst Metal】.

It was an item that turned into a random type of ingot when processed in a manner of making a normal ingot. However, in order to make a normal ingot 5 pieces of it were required, so one wasn't enough.

"Well, I guess I'll hold onto it for now?"

After we were exhausted by five boss battles, I was swept by the momentum as we went to defeat a Treant, but for better or worse, the Treant has already moved and we were unable to find it, which marked the end of our adventure.

"Khhh! Next time we find it, we're definitely taking it down!"

Even though I comforted frustrated Myu, in fact, while we were searching for the Treant I recovered some herbs from the collection points, so I thought it wasn't all that bad.

Getting a grasp on the wetlands' scenery I no longer felt anxiety.

In the end, I passed Myu and the others potions and consumables as a reward. As for what I felt, seeing as they escorted me and accompanied me in leveling, it seemed to me like the amount was small and wanted to give them additional reward. However, I didn't have enough items on hand and decided to go back to Atelier with everyone first.

Chapter 2 - Guild Solicitation and Disappearance

After five battles with the Darkman and search of a Treant in the wetlands, we explored quite a big area and were about to return to the 【Atelier】.

"As I thought, the battle with Darkman consumes MP very intensely as multiple arts and spells are used."

"In that case, how about the additional reward be MP Potions? Also, after doing this and that your satiety must have decreased quite a lot right?"

Since I was the escort subject and only provided covering fire my satiety parameter that indicates the degree of player's hunger reduced only to about half. However, Myu and Toutobi who ran around the enemy mobs as well as Lucato and Hino who wielded large weapons must have had their satiety decreased considerably.

"I'll add some of my store's sandwiches."

"True, I'm starving. Sandwiches are okay, but make some delicious food for us to eat."

"Geez, it can't be helped. But it'll take a while to make."

In response to Myu's request I answered with a sigh. Even if she was happy about being spoiled, I think spoiling her is a bad habit to have as an older brother.

Actually, it would be nice to make some food out of the drops from the wetlands' mobs, but unfortunately, no ingredients that could be used have dropped.

"Let's see... from the ingredients, I can use Mill Bird's meat."

In the 【Cooking】 Sense there was a skill that removed poison from the ingredients, and the ingredients that couldn't be utilized at first could be used.

However, the moment they heard about poisonous Mill Bird meat, two people's expressions have cramped up strongly.

"It's okay. I'll properly remove the poison. Also, Ryui's 【Purification】 will erase the bad status on it."

I just thought about it, but Ryui's 【Purification】 is a skill removing bad statuses and recovering HP, isn't it. Recently, I might have treated it only as part of the ingredient treatment process, but it must be just my imagination.

"Since it's a Mill Bird, then I could make a chicken nanban, karaage, simple stir fried chicken with vegetables or grilled chicken. From what you can take with you it just the grilled chicken would fit, but for the stats correction the best would be nanban and stir fried meat with vegetables... no, speaking of time and effort the stir fried meat and vegetables would be best. None of them are elaborate home cooking, so which one you want?"

"A-as expected of 【Nanny】, to be able to make so many dishes with just one ingredient..."

"Hm? This much is normal. Oh right, we purchased a surplus of meat so I want to burn through it as fast as possible."

Recently we've been supplied excessively by some of the 【Atelier】's customers. I immediately cooked meat like the Big Boar's since there was no need to remove poison from it, but I had to spend some time removing poison from Mill Bird's meat.

"Well, can't help it even if I think about it. Is both grilled chicken and stir fried vegetables okay? I'll make some extra so you can take it with you."

Since they couldn't really decide on what they want, I decided on my own.

And then, Lucato muttered absent-mindedly.

"——Is 【Atelier】 a tavern as well?"

"Lucato. My place isn't a tavern."

"I-I'm sorry."

Sometimes 【Atelier】 is mistaken for a restaurant or a food dealing store, but it's a workshop devoted to supporting and cheering the players on.

It's mostly because of the crafting Senses I acquired as my hobby.

At times I use 【Dosing】 as a medicine maker and provide some 【Cooking】 if necessary. Although I don't do it too much openly, I also dealt with 【Engraving】, 【Alchemy】 and 【Synthesis】. Although, no matter what I'm dealing with, the core business is still making potions.

After we finished to talk about cooking, I headed to the store.

There was a single player waiting in the 【Atelier】 which was a quiet store on the south side of the First Town.

He didn't look like he came to buy something and I didn't recognize this player.

When I approached the store with a puzzled expression he noticed me.

"Excuse me. Are you this store's player, Yun-san?"

Although he used polite wording, judging by his assertiveness he already knew it was me.

"That's right... is there something? If you need items, you can ask the clerk, Kyouko-san."

Since he most likely would be someone that's a pain to deal with, I wanted to escape before he would get to the main issue. That was the plan, but he was pushy and one-sided, saying his request right in the store.

"Yun-san, please come and join our guild, the 【Green Fall】!"

"I refuse. Go home."

Hearing me reject it completely, the male player was unable to understand what was said for a few seconds and gradually came to realization. Please, at least listen to me, is what he relayed with his gaze but I wouldn't meet it. I implied rejection. Go home, don't talk to me, you're in the way. And so on.

"I have no interest in someone else's guilds. If you're not a customer, then get out."

"Please, somehow! Right now we're a medium-sized guild, but if a famous player like Yun-san joins our recognition will go up! Also, all the combat members will be motivated! Right now it's the 【Eight Million Gods】 that's on top! But in future we'll become OSO's largest guild!"

I coldly stared at the player who continues to talk one-sidedly. I confirmed the state in which Myu and the others were as they came from inside, when I moved my sight I saw their facial expressions solidify.

Geez, I made them feel something unpleasant, extra frustration welled up inside of me.

"——That's why, please join our guild."

"I already refused at the very beginning, haven't I."

Finally taking a proper look at my face, he realized there's no hope. If anything, he realized that I was negative about it. In response to my gaze he faltered. Still, the solicitation continued.

"...um, that's a waste. Really."

"So what? There's no advantage in it for me to enter a guild is there?"

"We're always fighting! If you make recovery items for us, it'll be easy for you to raise your Mixing Sense."

"I don't feel like that's a benefit though... enough. Kyouko-san, from now on don't sell anything to this player. Also, if player of the same affiliation to guild 【Green Fall】 come, warn them unconditionally 'Next time, we'll ban you from entering'."

"Yes, understood."

Leaving it to the NPC Kyouko-san who entered before anyone realized, I entered the 【Atelier】's store.

With a charming smile, Kyouko-san has asked the player to leave. Unable to say anything to an NPC, he left depressed.

"Sorry for making you see something strange."

"N-no it's nothing, but..."

When I was about to enter the store's counter, Lucato answered hesitantly. Did something happen?

"Are you always refusing guild solicitation?"

Myu arrived at the counter seats and asked. While wondering what to say, I prepared the cooking utensils.

"Well, sometimes, I guess? I thought it'll be exposed sooner or later, but after I joined the summer camp event and was given a strange nickname they started to appear here."

I had rare young beasts, unicorn Ryui and a heavenly fox Zakuro as well as stable crafting facilities of the 【Atelier】.

Well, other than that there were various other reasons, but getting me alone join their guilds would open up many options to them, is what they must have felt.

"Recently, the intervals between the solicitations are growing shorter and it's getting annoying."

I lit a fire under a magical stove with a sigh and heated up the frying pan.

I took out Mill Bird's meat that had its poison removed for cooking and a few types of vegetables from an item box in the back.

Recently, I've obtained a stock of vegetables in order to raise my 【Cooking】 Sense. I cut some of them into bite-sized chunks with a knife and put them on the frying pan along with meat and oil. I put on salt and fried it all.

On the other hand I cut the bird meat into bite-sized pieces and skewered it for grilling.

"...a-amazing... to prepare two types of food at the same time..."

"Hm? I'm used to this kind of thing."

There wasn't enough of the stir-fried vegetables for six people, but I finished enough for one and placed it on a platter, making portions for everyone one after another. In addition to that I added the grilled chicken to the vegetables garnish.

"Fufufu, the vegetables crispiness and saltiness of the meat is really delicious..."

"...no, before that, they add a positive status correction. +3 ATK for 15 minutes. The grilled chicken seems like it's overlapping, but it's +2."

"Well, that's cause' its monster's meat. It doesn't raise as much as Big Boar's, but still does."

Seeing Toutobi stop moving her chopsticks surprised, I turned towards her and said so. Myu and Hino stuffed themselves not bothered, Lucato and Rirei were aware of the status enhancement but still still ate appetizingly. It was just Toutobi who was surprised and Kohaku who examined the food seriously. During a meal, their uniqueness has surfaced. While thinking so, I asked Kyouko-san to make tea for everyone and started to remove poison from the meat for the sandwiches.

"Yun-san, your hand's movements feel like you're very accustomed to it."

"Is that so? Well, I did this many times before, that's why."

They somehow understood how and where to cut in order to remove poison. Maybe it was because of some kind of assisting effect of a Sense, but not bothering with it too much I prepared the grilled chicken.

After a while, satisfied, everyone was about to go back with an excess of grilled chicken.

"Thanks for the food. I'll come to eat again!"

While saying so, Myu and the others happily talked while leaving the 【Atelier】.

"Geez, it's not like I'm cooking the entire time. Well, if I feel like it... there might be another time――"

This time, the amount of prepared Mill Bird meat has decreased and I'll have to remove the poison when I have some spare time.

Since there was no more time left for collecting materials or hunting small fry mobs nor crafting items, I started some crafting preparations here and there.

"——I'll excuse myself."

When I was removing unprocessed Mill Bird meat form the box, someone entered the store from the front. I turned around and saw two male players equipped with a dark-colored light armor.

One man just stood there letting out an intimidating feel. And the man who called out to me approached me with a wild gait.

"Welcome. I'm a bit busy now so tell your request to the clerk over there."

"My request is you. You're called Yun right? Our guild master wants you. Won't you enter our guild?"

"I refuse."

Without even facing the man, I rejected it.

"You little... who are you pickin' a fight with here? We're PK's."

The man pulled out a rapier from his hip and identified himself as a PK.

PK——Player Kill. It refers to the act of attacking other players in the game. And the people who do it are called Player Killers. There are various forms derived of

that, but it's something very rare in OSO. The reason for that was that there was very little merits in doing it...

"Stop being silent! Heck, show your face!"

The man claiming to be PK was frenzied, he impaled the counter with his rapier. Also, he pierced through the Mill Bird's meat that was piled up on the counter. The man who silently stood at the entrance also pulled out his weapon and moved towards me.

"What are you doing."

"Ha! Just some solicitation for the guild! No way you'll refuse, will you now."

"I'll repeat, I refuse."

A blue vein appeared on the man's forehead as I said that. But I couldn't care less.

"It sounds troublesome so I'll pass. Hurry up and leave."

In response to my words, the man reached over to me through the counter.

My collar was grasped and I was pulled in forcefully. I scowled as having my collar grasped felt painful

"Don't get ahead of yourself here. Don't think we're just any PK's. We'll mobilize the【Fosch Hound】 and persistently target those women who were here just now."

I didn't really care what was done to me, but this guy said he would target Myu and the others.

"...I won't forgive that. Targeting my acquaintances... how can you even say such a thing."

I've dealt with them cruelly until now, but this guy was an enemy. While my collar was still held I glared in the man's eyes.

"Ah? What's up wit that look in your eyes."

"Since you knew Myu and the others were in the store, you must've been watching from somewhere, right? That's why you entered when there was no one inside, I thought."

It seemed like I was quite angry. Since I said what I thought to provoke him, the grasp on my collar strengthened and my feet have left the ground as he lifted me.

When as expected, I couldn't bear the pain any more, a strong wind has ran through the shop.

"Just when I come to hear some interesting stories, I see some uncouth bunch here."

A sharp blow hit the arm that was holding me and I was released along with its impact. I fell down on my butt on the inner side of the counter.

"Khh... hey, we're going."

After calling out to the other man who just stood there stunned with a stiff expression, the men left with an unsteady gait. I give up, remember this, they say anything like that as they left. What a shame, I thought, feeling surprisingly calm.

And after the noisy PK guild recruiters have left, I spoke the names of the two who came in.

"——Mikadzuchi, also, Sei-nee."

"Ohh, it's a honor to be remembered."

•

"Kahaa! As I thought, booze is the best when there's a side dish to it!"

"Don't talk about booze with minors. Geez."

The ones who saved me were Sei-nee and Mikadzuchi. I was grateful for them coming to Atelier at perfect timing and drove away the malicious guild recruiters, but their reason for coming was...

"The lil' sis had some grilled chicken, so we came to eat too!"

Mikadzuchi said that shamelessly and ate grilled chicken with one hand while holding alcohol with the other.

"Even so, are you okay Yun-chan?"

"...I'm not okay at all."

Since such explicit threats started, it would be a bother to my acquaintances and friends.

"Haa, really, what to do."

I didn't think Myu and the others would lose to the PK'ers just because there was such a provocation, but since it might be a bother, maybe stopping to play OSO would be a good idea.

"What are you worried about so much. At times like this, you should consult with your seniors."

"As if I'd consult with a drunkard."

I said that while grilling one chicken after another, but since I couldn't come up with a conclusion I decided to consult with them.

"Recently I've had lots of guilds trying to recruit me and it's getting annoying. Also, it seems like I've caught an eye of a bunch like that one earlier."

"Some time might be needed until it calms down."

I nodded agreeing with Sei-nee. In the first place, the reason I refused guild invitations was because there was nothing in it for me.

"I get whatever I need from the Crafting Guild. Whether it's materials or the sales market."

"That's cause it deals with both members and non-members equally. Crafters in our guild can enjoy the crafting activities without transferring guilds too and are really happy about it."

Holding the grilled chicken in one hand Mikadzuchi answered hearing the talk about that.

"In that case, you'll have to do that. Go to a place with a few people for a while or don't show your face outside of the store."

"You mean——that I should disappear?"

As I returned the question, Mikadzuchi nodded while chewing on the grilled chicken.

"That's right. Well, once it calms down you can drop by and show your face behind the counter from time to time right?"

After finishing to eat the grilled chicken, Mikadzuchi waved the skewer around and drank a mouthful of her booze, because of her words a way out appeared in front of me.

There was no real need for me to do the work in the store. Before I have gotten a store I was always on the move. I had no problems returning to these times.

"That sound good. In that case, what do I need to do so?"

"If you want to disappear, you need two items. Missy, how much money did you save up so far?"

"If it's money I can use immediately... about 800kG? I have a bit more than that but I save it for upgrading my crafting equipment and for the store's maintenance costs..."

"Perfect. The first item you need is a 【Mini Portal】. Did you hear about it before?"

"If I'm not wrong, it's a portal that can be installed in guild homes right. A simple portal."

The Mini Portal basically had the same effect as the area transition objects. It was an item for organizations like guilds and could be installed freely in a specified location.

"If you have a Mini Portal, you can transition to various areas from inside of the store. You won't have to worry about being found outside of the store, and in case you're found at another portal you'll be able to go back to the store without anyone noticing, shaking off the surveillance. Also, oh right... as a side effect, if they notice you're transitioning to a Mini Portal, they'll think you already are some guild, Missy. Surely. There's no way they'll think you have your own."

Kukuku, Mikadzuchi made an evil smile. Certainly, being able to return freely to 【Atelier】 was very appealing.

"But, if I'm not wrong that costs a 1mG. I don't have enough money."

"Yeah. To disappear you need 200k more. Also, Sei. Do you have that with you?"

"By that you mean the 【Dark One's Mud】? I do."

Sei-nee operated the menu, and took out a small vial she held in her hand. It seemed like there was a black mud-like liquid in it, but it vibrated subtly and was downright creepy.

"...do I drink this?"

"No! The 【Dark One's Mud】 is a reinforcement material item. If you use it on the armor, it has an effect that reduces the range from which mobs sense you and decrease the amount of hate you gain from them. Other than that, it makes it hard for Senses 【See-Through】,【Sixth Sense】 and 【Abandonment】 to sense the preliminary operations of your arts and skills——in other words, it causes 【Recognition Inhibition】."

Suppression of hate generation and reduction of range from which mobs sense you were effects good for solo and rearguard players.

If the amount of hate didn't increase, my attacks would be treated as low priority.

And if the range from which mobs sense me decreased, it would make it easy to get one vs one situations, and would be useful when I search the area avoiding the combat.

Above all I could activate skills in combat with other players without being noticed, which allowed me to launch surprise attacks and raising the success rate of escape if the enemy is confused.

"Thanks. Sei-nee..."

"Woah, Missy. You not thinking you're gonna get this for free are you."

"Well, I'm fine with giving it just like that though."

When I reached out for the vial Sei-nee held, Mikadzuchi stopped me. I looked towards Sei-nee and smiled wryly.

"Missy, there's no need to brace yourself like that. I'm not going to eat you."

"No, I told you not to call me 'missy'. I'm a man."

I asserted that I'm a man like I usually did, but when she protruded an empty platter, I reluctantly put grilled chicken on it.

"Ah, wrap it for takeaway."

"This is thanks for being helped. Thanks for being helped..."

I repeated a several times, dissatisfied by Mikadzuchi's pushiness.

"...so, what do you want Mikadzuchi?"

"Don't rush so much. Let's organize it first. What Missy Yun needs, is the remaining 200kG of funding and 【Dark One's Mud】. If you have that, you'll be ready to disappear."

Disappearance thought up by Mikadzuchi. There was something missing from it. And, Mikadzuchi and others had it.

"Now, it's my turn. The guild 【Eight Million Gods】 wants to conquer the Maze City's normal dungeon. Although the enemy mobs' specs are low, they extensively use bad statuses. I want to overcome that."

With serious look in her eyes Mikadzuchi stared at me after giving me a problem to solve.

"Conquering a dungeon you say. You just have to do it right?"

"There's only cure that recovers from 【Confused】 and 【Charmed】 bad statuses one at a time right? It's quite tough on us."

"But that's still better than nothing right."

"Well, it can be substituted with recovery magic, but you can make a highly-effective potion right?"

During the exchange with me, Mikadzuchi drank happily. I think this kind of talk isn't all that bad.

"Then, I'll pull out a few of the ones I don't sell in the store. There isn't many, but I have a few kinds."

Starting with poison, I pulled out eight kinds of BS recovery potions, there were only a few.

The weak antidotes made initially cost 70G, but their recovered amount was low, for every stage of recovered amount the price went up.

Every rank up increased the price by several times, The 【Antidote 4】Potion cost approximately from 7kG to 10kG. However, to make those 【Alchemy】's 【Higher Conversion】 had to be used on 10 antidotes of the lower level so the loss was quite large.

That's why, other than the affordable potions, the store didn't put out that kind of goods.

"In that case you'll be able to make around 100kG of it. Now, next. Do you have poison?"

"...you, who are you about to poison. No, assassinate?"

"Don't be rude. It's one of the countermeasures."

When I looked towards Mikadzuchi with suspicion, Sei-nee lent her a helping hand.

"This time, we want to use poison causing bad statuses for leveling of resistance-type Senses. It's a more reliable method than waiting for weak mobs to use a BS attack."

Accustoming one's body to the poison and increasing resistance——what kind of ninja training is that. I thought of retorting.

"Well, I do. Just like with the BS recovery potions, I have many types."

"Then give us the three classified as mental types, anger, confusion and charm. Combining this with high MIND stat and resistance we'll be able to avoid the nasty ones."

I see, I thought after hearing Mikadzuchi's words. Admiring.

The body-type abnormal states, poison, paralysis, sleep and stun could be prevented to a certain extent with the DEF stat.

The mental-type abnormalities, confusion, charm and curse were - as Mikadzuchi said, statuses corresponding with MIND's magical defense.

"Then, that'll be bad status recovery potions 100kG in all and bad status inducing drugs 100kG as well. Each high level medicine dealing with bad statuses is very expensive."

In order to get them I cultivated a variety of poisonous herbs I gathered in the summer camp event on in the field behind the 【Atelier】, but the bad status medicine are very rare.

Since they were much more expensive than recovery potions, I squeezed what I could out of them.

However, there was something I still couldn't understand——

"You said the efficiency of getting a BS from a monster is low, but even without relying on the drugs you could substitute it with monster meat, right?"

I took out the highly-treasured potions from the box behind the counter.

When I returned my gaze to them after retrieving items from the box, I saw Sei-nee and Mikadzuchi made a bitter expression.

"There was a nasty incident."

"Yeah, I didn't think it would end up like that."

"Eh, what?! What happened?!"

Even as I panicked and asked the two, they didn't say anything and just stared at me with a warm, benevolent expressions.

"T-that's scary! What happened! Sei-nee!"

After that, Sei-nee and Mikadzuchi didn't tell me anything until the very end, further fueling my fear.

•

Two days after Sei-nee and Mikadzuchi visited the 【Atelier】, I didn't find a good moment to talk with Cloude but I have purchased the Mini Portal and placed it in the 【Atelier】's workshop.

Other than when I went to the town to purchase the Mini Portal during which Sei-nee accompanied me out of consideration, I didn't go outside of the workshop. After logging in I read books, played around with young beasts Ryui and Zakuro or created potion and spent time cooking.

And currently, I have had an appointment with Cloude, we lent one of the Crafting Guild's rooms and were facing each other.

"Sorry for not being able to help you immediately. It seems like you were targeted by solicitation of malicious guilds and PK's."

"Well, that's right. It doesn't feel real though."

Since it was something about me, I felt carefree about it. Even if I thought about it, I couldn't keep up with the reality anyhow.

"For a while I've heard that you were preparing to disappear. About the guild solicitation, we are partially responsible for that too. We'll lend you a hand to an extent possible."

"What do you mean?"

When I tilted my head puzzled at Cloude's remark, he said "we have involved you indirectly" as a prelude to the conversation.

"Do you remember how the price of 【Guild Emblem】 soared when we were creating this Crafting Guild?"

"Yeah, since there wasn't enough funds, we had to get it ourselves."

I remembered the very recent events, but not knowing how was that connected to current ones, I tilted head.

"Even if the price has soared, it will go back to normal sooner or later. When the 【Resale Guild】 determined they cannot profit any more, they sold the collected Guild Emblems at a bargain. It resulted with a price crash and a flood of small and medium-sized guilds, which leads to the current situation."

"Oh, so that's why the guilds are soliciting in order to increase their size even by a bit and to prosper. Calling something that can't be helped involving someone indirectly is really dutiful of you."

Good grief, I would never realize if he didn't say that. I sighed. But if he offers help, than I'll take it.

"Then, can you strengthen my armor with this 【Dark One's Mud】?"

"Got it. Then wear this inst——"I'm fine, I have beginner's clothes with me."——Tch, you successfully made an escape route huh."

As if I'd let myself get manipulated by Cloude into wearing cosplay every single time.

"It can't be helped. While at it I'll grade up the armor's material to strengthen it."

I switched the equipment and passed Ochre Creator set and the 【Dark One's Mud】 to Cloude.

The rework will take time. Oh right. Is afternoon in three days okay? Also, there's something I want to ask you for that's related to the event. Of course, there'll be a reward for it."

"I'm not in such a hurry to disappear so you don't have to hurry it. So, what do you want to ask me for?"

I wonder what does he want to request of me. If there's anything, it would probably be something about the recipes Lyly asked about earlier.

"I want you to create 【Insect Repelling Incense】 and 【Fireworks】. I've heard from Lyly that you already know the recipe for the Insect Repelling Incense, so I'll pass you just the Fireworks recipe."

I took a piece of paper Cloude took out from his inventory and took a look at it.

The Fireworks were a joke item, but the amount of materials required was large and their practicality was very low.

"This is something, 【Black Exploding Stone】, 【Phosphorous Soul Crystal】, 【Frog's Stomach】 and 【Strongly Acidic Jelly】... why does it require this much items."

"First, we intend to shoot them in the air for the Crafting Guild's event's closing. Just shooting magic into the air is too fantasy-like, so we thought of doing it in an ordinary way. And the 【Insect Repelling Incense】 is needed for the main event Lyly is planning."

"While there still is some practicality in 【Insect Repelling Incense】, the 【Fireworks】 recipe has no practical use as it's a joke item and has no actual use, yet is quite hard to find isn't it? You really did well to find it."

"Didn't you take a look at it yet? It's in one of the joke books that came from the camp event."

Among the items that dropped from special mobs in the camp event there were books.

I haven't read all of them yet. My 【Linguistics】 Sense was still level 15 which was very low and there are books I can't read.

"You convinced me. Then, I'll undertake the task of creating the 【Fireworks】 and 【Insect Repelling Incense】. Do you have any other items related to the event you need?"

"Let's see. Nothing comes to my mind right now, but just in case something might be required it would be good if you collected materials to use."

The event hosted by the Crafting Guild is supposed to be carried out over two days.

The players are going to sell items in booth and stalls——the free market.

On the special stage everyone will be able to perform——the stage show.

Bidding for the goods inside of the Guild Hall——the auction.

An event in which players fight each other, whether they are crafters or fighters ——PvP tournament.

Other than that there are various small events and highlight events for which various prohibitions are lifted, it'll be fun just looking at it.

"Now then, it's about time I leave."

"In that case, before you disappear go meet Magi first. Right now, she's outside of the town's west gate."

"West gate? Why there?"

There was no valuable minerals there, and the materials that can be collected in Cloude's dungeon are mainly cloth or leather-based.

"She's scouting for PvP event participants. They're using night that's unsuitable for search to increase the levels of their combat Senses, so most likely they'll voluntarily join the PvP."

"Got it. I'll go take a look."

After being told that by Cloude, I left the room in the guild hall. After taking a look at the size of the guild hall, I left the building.

Outside there was artificial light like lamps and torches illuminating the town, when I looked overhead, I had a good look at the stars in the night sky.

When I headed from approximately the centre of the town to the west gate, outside I saw a lightless world spread. However, in the corner of the plain that should have no light, I saw a number of spheres of light, under them there was a players poising a weapon widely and attacking each other with them.

"Eh? Yun-kun? What is it? Also, what's up with that equipment?!"

While I looked for her, Magi-san was first to call out to me.

"Good evening. I came here after hearing you'll be here. As for equipment, I left it with Cloude's for reinforcing."

"Is that so. Did Cloude do anything weird to you?"

"Yeah, it seemed like he'll pass me substitute equipment so had this one with me."

When I answered with a distant look in my eyes, she responded with "ahahaha that's correct", laughing dryly.

"Magi-san, I've heard you were scouting PvP players."

Recalling what Cloude has told me, I asked.

"Indeed. During the night there ain't any light. Not everyone is using a night vision like Yun-kun's 【Hawk Eyes】 or 【Light Element Talent】 to ensure light. That's why PvP'ers are playing out here at night."

"Hee, is that so."

In front of me, there were players repeatedly fighting one on one, honing their combat skills.

"That's why I came here to advertise PvP tournament and ask them to participate."

Impressed, I listened to Magi-san's story.

There were quite a few players here who seemed like they'd participate, but gathering the players together in advance and later having them advertise the event among their own connections seemed like a good idea.

"So that's I'm joining such basic activity."

"Do your best. I've been asked by Cloude for something as well, so I'll cooperate with you here too."

"Ah, you mean the thing Lyly has planned out. Lyly is really looking forward to it so do your best as well."

"Understood. Now then, excuse me."

I lowered my head to Magi and was about to leave the place. I've heard male players on the left of me talk about something curiously in undertone.

"Hey, that's 【Nanny】 isn't it. But why does she have initial equipment on." "It seems like she passed her equipment for strengthening. I really love her usual hot pants. I can worship her beautiful legs." "Idiot, her abdomen peeking out from the gap between the initial equipment's jacket is also good." "That lame beginner's equipment makes her look like a raw gemstone instead so it's quite good. I like that look as well."

For some reason it seemed like their spoiled desires were leaking out, but I didn't hear anything, I heard nothing at all.

Magi-san behind me removed a battle axe that shone with red behind me and leaned it against her shoulder.

"You guys! No looking at our Yun-kun with such perverted staaares!!"

She turned the battle axe with a grave look and started to chase around the escaping players who have indulged in their desires.

Magi-san let out an angry voice but her expression was a smiling one, after she started chasing them she made a teasing grin like that of a cheshire cat.

It looked like a cat chasing down rats.

Knowing that, the players have disengaged from PvP and joined the fun.

"Good grief... now then, time to go back to the 【Atelier】."

Behind me, one of the players was caught by Magi-san's battle axe, but I wasn't bothered by it and left the location.

Chapter 3 - The Treant and the Alchemic Mob

"Fuu, what do I spend time on today."

I opened the window, letting a cool breeze into the room and went out to the garden in sandals.

"Onii-chan, it's a holiday and yet you don't log in to OSO?"

"That's cause it's noisy all around. Even when I log in, I try to avoid places with a lot of people."

I answered Miu who was sitting on sofa and playing a mobile game, then carried laundry outside to dry it under the empty, autumn sky.

On the holiday there was cleaning, laundry and preparing meals. A limited amount of things to do.

"Well, even if I log in I read boo... speaking of which, I finished reading them all. I'll have to go to the library. Still, to borrow some I'd have to pass through the place with lots of people."

When I muttered that, Miu sitting on the sofa puffed up her cheeks grumpily.

"Confining yourself in a room is not good for mental health!"

"No, when we're playing we sleep in our rooms right, with VR Gear on. That doesn't change."

'You're wrong! It's refreshing just to walk through the wide plains and forests! Why are you confining yourself in a place dimmer than your own room?! Onii-chan, go out for a bit!"

"You're right. We're almost out of miso, I'll go buy some."

"Talk about shopping again! Use some time for yourself!"

I was grateful to Miu for being worried about me, but even with that said I didn't have anything to do.

"Good grief. Then, I'll stop by the book store while doing shopping in the afternoon."

I'll take it into consideration, I turned towards Miu and saw her tilt her head and then drop her line of sight to the mobile game.

"I'll be going out after the lunch, is there something you want?"

"Pound cake or sweets then!"

"Roger."

After I finished hanging the laundry to dry, I carried the empty laundry basket into the house.

I took the apron hung in the kitchen and with familiar movements I wore it, then asked for Miu's lunch request.

"What do you want for the lunch?"

"Gratin! I want to eat plenty of cheese!"

"Yes yes. Then, is gratin with minced meat and tomato sauce okay?"

I took out ingredients from the refrigerator and started preparations. I mixed fried minced meat with onions and peeled tomatoes, mixed it with macaroni, placed it in a small pot, covered it with tomato and white sauce as well as cheese and fried it.

Gratin is a very simple la carte dish, but such a minute lunch wouldn't be satisfying. What else should I make, I wondered as Miu called out as if she remembered something.

"Oh right. Today, Dad and Mom are going to come home early so there's no need to make dinner."

"In that case, I can make something simple. How about nabe?"

In that case there was no longer any need to think of assortment and quantity. Not having to think about the housework any longer, I finally had some leisure time.

I lined up the dishes prepared for lunch on the table and ate together with Miu.

After I finished cleaning up after lunch I quickly dressed myself, and holding a borrowed game I left the house.

"If it's books and groceries, I guess it would be best to go to the department store in front of the station."

I departed using public transportation. When I looked around the department store to find some things in addition to groceries and book, a familiar figure has entered my view.

The other person noticed me and nodded.

"Hello, Shun-kun."

"Hello, are you shopping too, Endo-san?"

"I thought I'd buy some sweets after coming to buy a book."

"I was kicked out of the house because it's apparently unhealthy for me to stay in on a holiday."

In response to my words Endo-san said "It's same everywhere, isn't it", and laughed quietly, I also put on a wry smile. And then her line of sight wandered as if she was looking for something.

"What is it? Are you looking for something?"

"Eh? No, I wondered if Takumi-kun is with you since you're always together."

"Right now he's probably playing some game in home I guess? He's always obsessing about games. He's probably in a party with someone since he's got lots of friends."

In response to my words Endo-san said "You've no mercy do you" and giggled.

"I see, so he's not here. Then you're alone after all?"

"Yup. I've been asked for some tasty sweets by my little sister."

"You sure do get along well don't you."

"Yeah, not bad I guess? Also, if you have anything like pound cakes to recommend, I'd gladly listen."

"In that case, there's a shop I always buy some. I guarantee the taste."

I was guided by Endo-san to a speciality chain's store in which there was merchandise lined up and packaged in small portions.

"Pound cakes here are delicious. I love the dried fruit and brandy types with strong smell and moisture."

"I see. I wonder what should I take. Considering Miu's taste..."

Hmm, all of them look delicious. I pondered.

I took the two with brandy and dried fruits Endo-san recommended me. Other than that, a simple pound cake with lemon and a few with black tea flavoring and put them in a paper bag.

"After getting this much I'll remember the taste, it'll be helpful if I ever try to reproduce the taste. Yup."

"I knew you always make your own boxed lunch, but you also can make sweets can you, Shun-kun."

"Well, when Miu feels like eating some I try to make what I can out of the ingredients I have."

However, recently after gathering a lot of ingredients I feel like I have steadily raised my Cooking level.

"Is that so. But ingredients for reproducing so many types on your own will be quite costly, won't they."

"It should be fine. I'm free to practice in VR. Also, I can study some recipes... find some on the net. Hey, was that weird? You're staring at my face."

"N-no. It sounds fun, I thought when I heard that. I'd like to try the pound cake you make next time."

"It won't be as good as the ones sold, but I'll share some with you."

I promised hopeful Endo-san without much consideration, but there should be no problem. I'll practice a bit in OSO and after remembering the procedure and taste I'll give her some, let's leave that for now.

"Now then, see you in school. Goodbye."

"Goodbye, Endo-san."

With a soft smile, Endo-san bowed her head.

I saw her off after she turned her back to me and breathed out.

"Polite and responsible, she really feels like a class committee member. It would be nice if she complimented the sweets I made."

But, she was looking for Takumi. Does that mean she's really conscious about him after all?

No way, is spring about to come for Takumi?! I imagined that and went back home while grinning.

At a perfect time for a snack I compared the purchased pound cakes with Miu.

"Onii-chan, you seem really happy. Did something good happen?"

"It's nothing. Rather than that, this pound cake was recommended to me by someone else but it's really delicious."

I was in a really good mood as I tasted the cake recommended to me by Endo-san.

Miu tilted her head curiously as she greedily ate the sweets.

I read the book I bought, spend some time checking sweets recipes and logged into OSO not long before going to bed.

I left the daily work on the sales and inventory management of 【Atelier】 to Kyouko-san. After leaving instructions on what to do tomorrow to her I logged out.

To the instructions I gave her, I added purchasing material for sweets.

•

On the afternoon three days after I left my armor with Cloude, the equipment has arrived after being subjected to strengthening. It seems like it was brought by Kyouko-san the NPC as she was carrying the goods sold in consignment.

CS No.6 Ochre Creator 【Outerwear】

DEF+29 Additional Effect : DEX Bonus, Auto Repair, Recognition Inhibition

The additional effect was added into the external clothes and all of the deposited equipment was improved with a higher level material.

During the few days without Ochre Creator, during the crafting activities I had 10% to 20% failure probability and observed a degradation in the crafted item quality which made me realize just how great was the 【DEX Bonus】.

"Still, even if I shut myself in this small workshop it doesn't change the fact it's really noisy."

In fact, during my absence a few incidents happen in the 【Atelier】 with multiple parties and players crowding in.

They named themselves members of 【Fosch Hound】 and came to continue their guild recruitment that failed last time and acted clearly intimidating. The store is really noisy, while thinking that I pat Ryui and Zakuro who lied on the cold stone floor.

"I didn't really notice the problem before, but that bunch's actions are causing problems to others as well, aren't they,"

I recalled how I realized the truth after a player who came to the store contacted me through friend chat, I immediately banned all of the 【Fosch Hound】 members from entering and immediately reported it to Cloude.

"They're looking down on crafters aren't they. Fine. We'll take them on with all we have!"

Magi-san who heard about it from Cloude was so angry she looked like a raging inferno.

After her call to action, majority of the Crafting Guild was immediately notified of the 【Fosch Hound】's malicious actions. Moreover, since some crafters were also harassed in similar manner by different guilds, some guilds have been ostracized and the amount of guilds started to decrease.

"Two PK guilds and eight guilds have been ignored by multiple crafters and started to blame others, they were way too active over the last two days."

Good grief, why can't I quietly spend some time. I spat out a sigh and immediately commenced the disappearance in order to run away from this hassle.

For the time being I was in a picnic mood, wanting to stroll around on the field together with the young beasts while gathering materials to finish Cloude's request.

Since both Ryui and Zakuro were very conspicuous I asked Ryui to use illusion to hide itself and stood in front of the installed 【Mini Portal】.

I raised the usually lowered hood part of Ochre Creator into which Zakuro entered and performed a check on my equipment.

"All right, equipment ready. ——【Mini Portal】, transition."

Together with Ryui and Zakuro I jumped to the town I registered a few days ago.

The registered 【Maze Town】 wasn't my goal, it was materials in the southern part of wetlands. That's why in order not to be seen I have entered it from the 【Maze Town】 side.

"Now then, let's go backwards from here. I wonder how strong is the 【Recognition Inhibition】 effect."

When I entered into the wetlands, there was a reaction from 【See-Through】 Sense.

The boss Darkman was the first encounter after coming to wetlands from the 【Maze Town】 side, it was non-active at the moment but there was no knowing when will he attack, so without looking away from him I slipped away. However, when I was passing by I made a small nod to no one in particular, maybe it's because I'm Japanese.

"First, let's see how does the 【Recognition Inhibition】 effect work for soloing. I need to examine it. 《Enchant》 ——Attack, speed."

I confirmed there was a Moor Frog in the shallow swamp hiding under the lotus and drew the bow in its direction.

The released arrow penetrated the lotus leaf roughly in the same way as when I performed some combat training with Myu and the others. With this, the Moor Frogs all around jumped all at once. This time, thanks to the 【Recognition Inhibition】 effect it only resulted with five of them coming at me.

"Decreasing the range from which enemy senses you is one of the effects. Next is..."

Since Ryui and Zakuro were invisible they weren't targeted and the frogs have come towards me. When I took distance by stepping back a few of them stopped for a moment before they returning to their original location.

"...I guess the range of their pursuit decreased as well? Well, it'll be easy to use it solo."

I muttered, when I further increased the distance, all except for the one I attacked have went back. It seems that no matter how strong the hate decrease effect is, the attacked one would still chase me.

What I learned from the Myu party's actions was——victory goes to the ones who moves first. I have executed that.

The frog used body blows and tongue attack, to take it down before it used water attack I held my breath and showered it with continuous attacks.

"——《Bomb》"

Using the combination of the bow and magic as the enemy approached I tried to deal as much damage as possible, and when it approached I switched to the knife, slashing it while avoiding the body blow.

"Did I grow accustomed to avoiding it naturally after fighting against them many times?"

I fought against them on one versus one basis many times, and since getting hit by their body slam was frustrating I'm glad that my avoidance skills have gone up.

I circled around the frog that jumped towards me, stepped on it with my leg and impaled its head with the kitchen knife to stop its movement. Along with a light response I saw its HP decrease significantly, I confirmed that it wasn't defeated yet and stabbed it again. In the blink of an eye the Moor Frog disappeared leaving nothing behind. Except for——

"All right, material for the 【Fireworks】 acquired."

What I obtained was a drop from the Moor Frog, 【Frog's Stomach】.

I've gotten some when I was hunting together with Myu, but it was better to acquire more of them for the sake of making the adjustments easier.

"Let's safely hunt one after another until we reach the safety area. Ryui, Zakuro, be careful."

Together with the two invisible animals I proceeded in the direction of safety area while defeating the enemies.

In the area with a lot of mobs that attacked from surprise I assessed the situation and struck first.

In addition to the flocks of Moor Frogs, I found non-active flat and yellow jelly mobs with exposed cores——Mold Slimes. These mobs dropped the 【Strongly Acidic Jelly】 material that was used in 【Fireworks】 as well.

Since it was hard to hit the nucleus that was their weak point with a weapon that used point attacks like a bow, I used the Earth Element's 《Bomb》 four times to take them down.

Majority of the materials for the 【Fireworks】 could be gathered in this area. Not just from the mobs, but also collected or mined.

"Oh, that spot, isn't that a collection point. But it's in the middle of entire group of slimes."

In a spot with black and moist soil I wouldn't normally notice it in, there was an extraction point, in its surroundings there were hidden yellow Mold Slimes lurking. They gathered together to eat something similar to moss.

To take down all five of Mold Slimes at once using 《Bomb》 magic time after time would be tedious. Although they were weaker than other slimes of the same rank, I still didn't want to take on more than one at once.

"Even if I threw multiple magic gems at them and won thanks to the chain bonus, using gems would be a waste... hm? Some info came."

Just now, I raised the 【Earth Element Talent】 Sense's level by fighting Moor Frogs earlier and it seems like I have mastered a new spell.

It seemed perfect for taking down a group of mobs like these all at once.

"It doesn't necessarily have to take them all out in one blow, maybe I'll enchant it into magic gems and... doesn't work huh."

The gems I took out were the usual medium-sized ones, but it was no good.

"Then, I'll raise the attack power and take out the remaining ones later. 《Enchant》 ——Intelligence.”

I applied an INT enchant on myself and pressed my hands against the ground.

"——《Earthquake》"

The ground started rumbling around me, and before long my own body shook.

The fourth spell of the Earth Element 《Earthquake》 was one that generated an earthquake with the caster as the focus.

The side effect was one that caused the enemy to be stunned during the earthquake's duration. Against mobs that move in the ground like worms or this time's Moor Frogs as well as Mold Slimes that are lurking on the ground it was especially effective.

However, its usability was very poor. While it didn't damage the allies, the shaking could be directly felt by the companions and inhibit their movements.

Moreover, if there's another party in the vicinity, it couldn't be lightly used. It also had too small range to hold off large mobs as it was centered around the user and had a low range.

Other than that, it was meaningless to use it against flying mobs.

"The number of mobs taken down is two, huh. Well, fine."

The Mold Slimes hidden on the ground sprung up and appeared, about half of them was defeated.

I threw two Magic Gems in the middle of the remaining slimes and defeated them with a blast.

"So I can't take them out in a single hit, huh. As I thought, it's either because the Sense grew just now, or because my Senses are too low. It was weaker than I thought it would."

There was a lot to reflect on, but before that I had to dig up the collection point.

In contrast to the mining point for which I used a pickaxe, here I took out a scoop for farm work from the inventory.

I dug up the soil collection point while listening to the soft sounds, what I pulled out was a pure black stone and low grade ore, and then gemstones have appeared.

There were more of them than I had used before and I thought that having a positive balance was nice. The item I was looking for was there too so I was satisfied.

I picked up the pure black stones——【Black Exploding Stones】 and put it in my inventory. Since there were only eight of them which wasn't enough, I moved away from the spot and searched for another collection point. Looking for the same dark soil I continued to harvest.

Sometimes, there were flocks of Moor Frogs on the collection points too dense for 【Recognition Inhibition】 to work making me give up on it. At times I replenished herb-based materials and ore-based materials at different collection points and spend time meaningfully.

"Let's take a break in the safety area. Come, Ryui, Zakuro."

I sat down on the ground in a slightly elevated spot in wetlands and deposited my back on a tree.

pon *pon*, I hit my thigh lightly, calling my young beast partners, and their figures that were hidden behind illusion have appeared. Ryui put its head on my knees and I pat Zakuro who rubbed its neck against the back of my head.

Fuu, I took a deep breath and enjoy the large space and sense of freedom.

Recently, until the preparations for my disappearance were completed I have confined myself in the narrow workshop the entire time. It wasn't that I hated the Atelier, but I felt a sense of liberation after playing solo for the first time in a while.

"Surprisingly, I might've been really tired mentally."

I muttered, feeling very exhausted.

After spacing out for no reason for a while, I took out sandwiches from the inventory.

I tore it into pieces to make it easy for Ryui and Zakuro to eat and gave it to them. I smiled as I watched as they eat.

"Ahh, I'm being healed～."

While watching as Zakuro pecked the pieces and Ryui ate a third of it at once I took out a bottle with piping hot tea for myself.

The design of the game was fantasy-styled, but as long as it was placed in the inventory heat wouldn't escape. After drinking hot, sweet tea I let out a deep breath.

"Haa, black tea is really good."

Since there was no sign of people coming here I took off the hood that obscured my head down to the eyes and let out both my hair and the hot air from within outside.

As I got into the lazy, picnic mood, I suddenly found certain existence outside of the safety area's boundary. A wobbly, wavering, yellow ball of fire drew an 8 in the air, appealing in my direction.

"A wisp, huh. I guess I'll take the invitation while at it."

I lifted my hips in a heavy manner and moved closer to the yellow ball of fire. Wisp——or to be exact the mob called Will-o'-Wisp. It was a mob of the ball of fire or soul-type.

As for the balls of fire, their colors represented emotions. Green was joy, red was anger, blue was sorrow and yellow was fun.

Just like the Mold Slimes, the Wisp was a non-active mob. Although they drop 【Phosphorous Soul Crystal's Fragment】 material, there are also other ways of obtaining it. The 【Phosphorous Soul Crystal's Fragment】 had the same effect as

【Phosphorous Soul Crystal】 but they were smaller and five of them were needed instead of one.

"Can you eat this?"

I had Ryui and Zakuro wait beside the tree and moved in front of the Wisp.

I spread out Medical Spirit Weed I just collected that was a material for the High Potions in front of the Wisp.

Like an insect attracted to the light the wisp has closed on the Spirit Medical Weed. Although the Wisp's flame has wrapped around my hand, but since it wasn't hostile I didn't feel any heat from it.

When the flame touched the bundle of herbs as if licking them, the items disappeared turning into particles... no, they were actually absorbed by the Wisp, and its flame changed into green flame of joy.

And after the Wisp finished eating all the herbs from my hand, it's body made of flame trembled.

Together with a *pop*, whitish crystals fell out of the Wisp's body.

Two, three of them fell on the ground piling up.

"That's quite a lot. Phosphorous Soul Crystals huh, I wonder if this much is enough?"

Wisp is a mob that steals life energy of the living things. By giving items to a non-hostile Wisp, it releases excess energy in form of a Phosphorous Soul Crystal.

If they were defeated, a player would obtain only pieces of the crystal, instead, the barter with a mob in the wilds was interesting and one could get better items than by doing it normally.

"Oh, there's a 【Phosphorous Soul Ore】 mixed in. Not only it's a rare drop but also one with low drop rate."

I put the items in the inventory, satisfied with the result.

In the end, I got 23 【Phosphorous Soul Crystals】 and 2 pieces of 【Phosphorous Soul Ore】.

I played around with the wisp that wrapped around my hand until Ryui and Zakuro got tired of waiting and arrived next to me.

Zakuro grasped my clothes and dangled on it with its light body and just dangled, but Ryui poked me with its small horn while making sure not to hurt me to express its dissatisfaction.

"Uwah?! Sorry! Now then, let's resume the search."

At the same time as I got by surprised by them, I saw off the Wisp that disappeared into void and finished the break, restarting the search of wetlands.

•

As I continued the search of wetlands on the south, I saw a male and female players walk from the direction of the First Town while quarreling.

"That's why! We came here! I want to hurry up and go further!"

"No way I said. Let's go on steadily. Hey, listen to what I say."

They were about Myu's age. The girl proceeded forward angrily, and from the conversation it seemed like the boy wanted stop her from overdoing it by coming here.

When I checked their equipment, it seemed like it was the initial one.

Seeing the equipment that used to be everywhere when the OSO's service started made me very nostalgic.

The initial equipment gave a dowdy impression, which instead gave me an idea just how green the novices are.

The girl notices my gaze and our eyes met, then she made a questioning look in my direction.

She was a little bit wary, maybe because I was suspicious with a hood covering my head. While I thought of that, the boy nodded towards me and started to persuade the girl again.

In an area matching their current level I would just see them off like this.

But this time, I'll meddle in and stop them.

"Good grief, what are you doing. There are bigger problems than going steady or fast."

I moved towards the unsuspecting boy and girl who wandered into the wetlands. Even though they came shallow in, it's a miracle they got this far without being attacked by Moor Frogs. I sighed in response to the two's luck.

"What was that just now? Since you're solo it must mean you're quite strong doesn't it? Are you trying to show-off with that hood on?"

Maybe let's give up on meddling. I thought with a distant look in my eyes. However, the moment I let my eyes off them they started to move.

"Rai-chan, there's a collection point there. If we take these items back we can buy some items without overdoing it."

"Come on, what a worrywart you are. I get it. For better or worse, we didn't meet any enemies, if we had we would take them down and get some experience."

The moment I looked away from them, they headed to a collection point that was a slight distance away. However, I found that place earlier and avoided it.

"Wait! That's——"

I called out to them to make them stop, but the two headed for the collection point at the base of a tree.

I took out a kitchen knife from the inventory and clenched Magic Gem of 【Clay Shield】 in my left hand.

What was in the place the two headed to was not a flock of the Moor Frogs. A mob that mimicked a tree, a Treant was there.

"What. Is she in a hurry because she don't want us to take the items?"

"Hey, the person from earlier is coming our way!"

The two turned around saw me and their expressions stretched.

Geez, even though I'm trying to stop the children's recklessness, I end up being mistaken for a PK. What a disaster. I spat out curses in my mind and continued my charge.

"Are you trying to get in our way?! Al, we're taking her down!"

"Rai-chan... okay.”

Oh c'mon. The two pulled out their weapons, poised them in my direction and turned their back on the Treant. How comical.

Behind the two, the Treant gradually cancelled the mimicry and slowly spread its stems, cavities resembling eyes and mouth appeared, it made a nasty smile and turned its branches sharp.

"Ryui, Water Shield! 《Enchant》 ——Defence, speed. 《Cursed》 ——Attack!"

I cast a speed enchant on myself and closed the distance all at once, then passed by the two who set up their weapons. After I got close to them the girl with a naive stance thrust at me with her spear, I avoided it and then passed by the boy who held a staff with both of his hands before parrying the Treant's sharp branch.

"W-what?! Kyaa!!"

"Uwaa!!"

I entered between the two and intercepted the sharp spear-branches. I cut them down, but only within my reach. The kitchen knife that had a small reach was unable to cut some down and the attacks have closed on the two.

However, I did what I could and left the rest.

"Nice, Ryui! You two, hurry up and run!"

The spear-branches that were about to pierce through the two were stopped by Ryui's shield, it splendidly blocked the blow that came after it had its attack power reduced by my curse.

I cut down the extended branches and prevented the mimicry tree's surprise attack.

However, it didn't mean that I blocked all of the attacks. I was unable to block the attacks that came at my head as they approached my body and my head was

grazed. That's when hood I had on came off. My hair was exposed to the outside air, but I didn't care about that now.

"...beautiful."

"Y-yeah."

"Don't space out! Escape with Ryui's lead!"

When I called out to the dazed two, they returned to their senses.

"Let's run! Nana-chan!"

"Don't call me 'nana-chan'. I'm Raina now."

"S-sorry, Rai-chan."

"Hurry up and go you two."

While I listened to their calm conversation I disposed off one spear branch and a vine whip with the kitchen knife. At first I gave up on the attack and devoted myself to the defense, but the enemy's attacks wouldn't shift to me.

Even though I interfered so much it still wouldn't change its target, making me impatient. A single fact has come to my mind.

"Damn!! So that's why!"

The effect newly added to the armor 【Recognition Inhibition】 also suppressed the generation of the hate value towards me by the enemy mob. It was very advantageous for players rearguards and hit-and-run attacking players, but to have the target changed to yourself it required of the player to deal more damage than normally.

"You said we should run, but we can fight too!"

"Don't even try now! There'll be a joint struggle penalty!"

"Ghh..."

"Not good. There's no timing to escape."

As for the Treant's attacks I couldn't intercept, I took them on with my body after raising my defensive power, still, my HP was being scraped off.

"It's sink or swim now, let's try damaging it all at once!"

I dropped the Magic Gem of 【Clay Shield】 I held to the ground and pulled out a new 【Bomb】 ones.

And after throwing it at the Treant, I said the keywords.

"——【Clay Shield】, 【Bomb】!"

Starting from the gem that was dropped on the ground an earthen wall has rose up, the spear branches were received by the earthen barrier, and their tips could be seen as they broke through the wall.

What echoed immediately after was a sound of multiple 【Bomb】 explosions and an impact that hit the earthen wall.

At the same time as a sudden roar sounded and a cloud of dust has swept in I called to the two, telling them to escape.

"We're running! Ryui, Zakuro go ahead!"

In response to my voice, Ryui who was defending the two headed towards the wetlands' exit. I pushed the two's backs as if to make them keep up with Ryui.

"I'll run as w——?!"

Something has pierced my shoulder and side, I reflexively looked towards it.

What was sticking to them were hardened, bright green leaves. After being released they bypassed the mud walls and making a curve they flew towards me.

"Haha, shurikens, for real?"

In addition to that, on the other side of the crumbling walls I could see the Treant make an angry expression because its prey has escaped.

It wasn't a nasty smile, when it saw me the corners of its eyes and mouth have raised again, making a smiling expression.

"What the heck. After finally escaping it changed target to me. That's way too slow."

I spat out curses, then soon after got hit by the leaves thrown at me and lost my balance.

The amount of HP I had remaining was 30%. It'll be really bad if I don't hurry and recover with a potion. Thinking so I looked up at the Treant in front of me.

"Heyhey, it's coming at me at full force dammit."

A number of branches has twisted gathering together, making up a thick mass. To describe it plainly, it looked like a club. It raised the club very high.

"Good grief, with this much strength there's no way we'll all get out of this safely."

I'm as weak as usual. When I sighed after thinking something so simple, I heard a voice.

"——《Summon》. Go, Bronze Golem!"

The Treant's cavities formed an unpleasant expression.

A copper-colored fist sank into its face.

I couldn't move as a mass of metal appeared together with a strong wind pressure.

A copper-colored colossus appeared from the wetlands' ground and hit the Treant, raising it slightly up.

The Treant and copper-colored golem. Also, there was a single player that appeared between us.

As a result of the Bronze Golem intervening in my battle, we were covered in a black aura of joint struggle penalty, me, the golem and its master.

The weakened Bronze Golem was constrained by the Treant.

"H-hey! There's a joint struggle penalty!"

"Yeah... I'll apologize now, I'm sorry."

The one who hold my hand was a beauty with a mask on the upper half of her face. She had long, cream-colored hair in a braid that flowed towards the front from her shoulder and spoke in a mechanical tone of voice, she gave me a very neutral impression.

The masked beauty pulled out a single sword from the sheath by her waist.

Although it was a double-edged straight sword, it was very mysterious as it's blade was divided into different segments at regular intervals, it was pressed against my shoulder, I was lightly stabbed.

"Oww!"

"Golem! Defeat the Treant with all you got!"

The masked beauty dealt a minimum amount of damage to release the joint struggle penalty and instructed the Bronze Golem.

The copper-colored giant clad in black aura who was entwined by the Treant's vines raged as he was released from the double constraint of vines and the aura.

Even as we watched from the back, the wind pressure from the copper-colored fist has reached us. The golem's giant body's attack crushed the Treant's trunk, scraping it off.

Sandwiching the part of the trunk that corresponded to the Treant's face, the golem exerted strength in a manner similar to a vise. Slowly damaged by the pressure, the Treant's HP was being slowly but surely reduced.

"Continue and crush it!"

In response to the beauty's instructions, golem increased strength of its hold.

The Treant tried to escape and by twisting branch spears and vine whips formed a club to hit the golem, it slipped of the copper-colored shiny body's surface, and it failed to escape.

『"Gi-giiiiiiiiyaaaaaaaaaaaa——"』

In the end, cracks appeared on the tree and together with its harsh cries of agony it was crushed by the golem's grip. The shattered pieces of wood turned into particles of light and gradually disappeared, the Treant's body disappeared as well.

"...the drop is Treant Wood eh. Are you okay? You need recovery?"

"N-no. I'm okay! I can recover myself."

I took out a High Potion from the inventory and drank it.

In meanwhile I observed the person in front of me. Her beautiful braid shook and she had formed a smile with her mouth. Although her eyes were hidden by the mask, judging by her body shape she was definitely a woman.

"It's troubling if you're being so wary. Certainly, I have attacked you to release joint struggle penalty, and I'm sorry for not explaining."

"No, I don't mind that."

"I see, that's great then."

"Um... thank you. You saved me."

There was a little bit of truth in what she said about me being wary. However, there are even more eccentric people in the world of OSO. Compared to them, she was still cute. Rather, depending on the perspective, a young girl acting cool was a very pleasing sight.

"...for some reason you're making a really charming smile, aren't you misunderstanding something?"

I was asked that with a mechanical-ish voice. I asserted "not at all". It wasn't just our Myu, there were other players coming to the 【Atelier】 who had some quirks and committed themselves to some role-playing or characterization.

"Haa, well, fine. Now then, let's go back."

"You're right, was Ryui and Zakuro able to properly lead them out?."

"Are those kids your acquaintances?"

"No, some reckless beginners have come this way so I just helped them out."

Haa, I give up. I sighed. After trying to help complete strangers, I was about to lose myself... the eyes hidden behind the mask stared at me intently.

Feeling pressure from the stare, I went "ahahaha", laughing dryly.

"Rather than that, let's find those players from earlier."

Since the direction they fled in was towards the First Town so they should be fine.

After I stood in front and started to walk through the wetlands, the masked player moved right beside and the golem tagged along behind us.

Occasionally I took a look behind to take a look at the golem.

A copper-colored giant. From the part corresponding to the eyes on its head I felt no intelligence, but its figure seemed reliable.

The player who could tame such a powerful golem must have been considerably skilled.

"That's right. I still haven't introduced myself. I'm Yun, nice to meet you."

"True. As for the current name, please call me Emilio. Other people call me——【Material Merchant】. Okay? 【Nanny】 Yun."

As I made a disgusted expression, Emilio quietly laughed with mechanical-ish voice.

"Sorry. I'll rephrase it. 【Atelier】 store's owner, Yun."

"Grr, I hate that nickname from before..."

"I'll be careful then."

I see, the moment we started to go with the light flow, the entrance to the forest has come into our view.

Ryui and Zakuro who were waiting for me at the boundary with the forest ran up to me so I caught them.

I pat Ryui and Zakuro who behaved really spoiled, it was a recoil after worrying about me. On the other hand, the beginner players were unable to stand up from the spot after seeing the Bronze Golem.

Some time had to pass until the two were to talk calmly.

Chapter 4 - Beginners and Material Merchant

"Um... thank you very much for coming to help us. As I thought it was impossible challenge for beginners. Ah, I'm called Alphard. Feel free to call me Al."

"...I'm the older sister, Rainard. Raina is fine."

The saved duo calmed down, they turned towards the 【Material Merchant】 and introduced themselves.

Raina, the older sister had trimmed short ash-blonde hair, only her hair on the sides in the front was long. Her slightly slanted eyes and a grumpy expression gave a strong-willed impression.

Even now, it was unknown whether she was grateful for being saved or just acting rebellious, she introduced herself with just a few words.

Al, the little brother had more grey than black short hair and slightly drooping eyes and was surrounded by a calm atmosphere. He lightly apologized for Raina's cold attitude, he might have been bossed around by her. I could somewhat sympathize with having to go along sisters' whims.

"I'm Yun."

"I'd like you to call me Emilio."

The 【Material Merchant】 and I briefly introduced ourselves and delved into the main subject.

"So, you two, why were you in such a place?"

"....."

"Come on Rai-chan. I"ll talk."

Al started to explain in place of Raina who defiantly kept silent.

"Just by taking a look at us you can tell, but this is our first day in OSO."

Raina and Al knew about OSO since the β and seemed to have applied to become testers.

They were unable to obtain VR Gear from the first batch produced, but this time they were able to get it from the second batch and were finally able to start playing the game.

"Is that so. So that makes you late starters."

"Yes, I actually think that we should enjoy it steadily but... there's also Rai-chan."

"What, I just chose a risky method to become stronger. I can do it."

Raina was shaken by what Al said and angrily raised her shoulders.

There's lot's to puberty isn't there. I thought so and sent Al a gaze, then spoke to encourage him to talk.

"Rai-chan wanted to keep up with OSO and checked various walkthroughs on the net, looked around lots of places and watches lots of videos, thinking about it... and, um..."

"Found a method of leveling she thought she'll be able to use?"

When 【Material Merchant】 spoke with a mechanical voice Al shook his head vertically.

"It was a video called 【Low level solo Moor Frog leveling】."

"...haa? What are you talking about."

Possessed SP25

【Bow Lv33】【Longbow Lv4】【Hawk Eyes Lv43】【Speed Increase Lv25】
【See-Through Lv6】【Magic Talent Lv43】【Magic Power Lv46】
【Enchant Arts Lv19】【Dosing Lv24】【Earth Element Talent Lv16】

Unequipped:

【Alchemy Lv30】【Synthesis Lv30】【Engraving Lv1】【Swimming Lv13】
【Crafting Knowledge Lv32】【Taming Lv7】【Linguistics Lv16】
【Cooking Lv23】

I checked my Senses just now, but the average level of my Senses was about 26. How can you do it when you're even lower leveled.

"Ohh, that video. It uses a specific approach, tactic and utilizes prepared equipment. Also, quite high skill is required from the player."

"But in that video it worked!"

"I said, it's too reckless. In the making of that video there were collaborators who prevented unwanted mobs from joining in. Do you even have anyone who can do that?"

Raina closed her mouth in response to 【Material Merchant】 Emilio's somewhat cold tone of voice and just argument.

"As I thought. We should listen to what experienced people have to say, Rai-chan."

"Even so! I want to become strong!"

"Rather than get a death penalty for being reckless, it's better to do what's within the range of your abilities right? Are you really fine with involving your little brother with that?"

She said she wants to get strong, but having me point that out Raina fell silent and chagrined. Younger brother Al said "I don't mind" but Raina realized that she was too impatient and blinded by that, receiving a shock.

"Then that'll be it. I myself was saved by 【Material Merchant】 Emilio so it might sound like I'm acting self-important, but today was just a whim. That's why we'll be going already."

"——Wait!"

Leaving that behind I tried to leave with Ryui and Zakuro, but Al raised his voice to stop me from going.

"Please make me, no, please make me and Rai-chan strong! Please!"

"Wait, Al! What are you saying?!"

"I mean, look, it's the person who saved us! We don't have anyone to rely on here! It's because Rai-chan's attitude is so bad!"

"Al! You've some guts to disparage your older sister in public! A mere little brother, mere twin brother shouldn't try acting like he's better than his sister!"

Right in front of me the siblings went "***gyaa gyaa!***" and "***wah-wah!***" noisily quarreling. Those two, they aren't fighting for real are they, I could somehow tell. In particular, some of Raina's gestures and wording reminded me of Myu.

However, I wasn't strong enough to think of helping them, and couldn't show them the way.

"Then, since it seems like it'll take time I'll be goi——"

"I won't let you get away! Guild solicitation is horrible now so there's no one to rely on! I can't let such a good and caring person get away!"

"...I don't think that has anything to do with it."

Al who grabbed mine and the 【Material Merchant】's hands was willing to detain us even as he was being dragged along, and I was unable to shake him off.

Also, there was a term I was concerned with, the thing called 'guild solicitation'. Somehow, several patterns have appeared in my head and my feet stopped.

"Haa, geez..."

"Will you help?"

"Well, it can't be helped this time can it?"

Possibly, I might have been part of the reason for that.

The flood of new guilds appearing stems from the competition between the 【Crafting Guild】 and the 【Resale Guild】.

During the start-up of the 【Crafting Guild】 we planned to purchase 【Guild Emblem】 from the market to establish it, but the 【Resale Guild】 bought them out to lift the price.

That's why we obtained the 【Guild Emblem】 directly by doing the guild founding quest and established the 【Crafting Guild】.

Because of that the 【Guild Emblems】 became a dead stock and a large amount of them was sold at low price, players purchased it and a flood of guild establishment has come.

In the end, it might have been just me blaming myself, but felt there was a connection.

"You're right, it's something Yun's acquaintance, Taku caused after all."

"Yeah... hey, haa?! What does Taku have to do with this!"

"The one who defeated a Moor Frog on level 8 in the video mentioned earlier was your acquaintance, Taku. I took a look at that video and confirmed it."

Hearing that and coming to a realization that Taku and I are acquainted Al and Raina stared at me respectfully with a glitter in their eyes. However, Taku and I were two different people and even if we know each other, it's not something that compliments me nor am I a maniac gamer! Don't look at me so expectantly!

"...Taku, I'll definitely punch you!"

I secretly swore in my mind. Still wearing a mask, Emilio looked towards me with pity.

"It can't be helped. I'll join too. Well, you might not want to stay with a suspicious person that wears a mask on her head though."

"Thank you very much!"

"...hmph."

Al happily lowered his head, but Raina seemed not to acknowledge Emilio and put on a cold attitude. It made Al panic, but Emilio wasn't offended in particular, instead she just smiled wryly.

"Well, I won't continue doing it forever, maybe until I reach second or third town. Until then, I'll teach you some things."

"Then, I'll make some items from the materials I have with me. Also, I want some help collecting materials, I guess?"

The two of us gave them some conditions, but neither mine nor 【Material Merchant】's were harsh, we lent them a hand in leveling in quite a gentle manner.

For some reason I felt that I didn't disappear at all, but forming a party of four people who aren't affiliated with any guild wasn't that bad.

The consultation was over and we were about to leave the location but——

"W-what?! My body's strength is..."

"I can't stand up either. I have no strength. Enemy?"

Raina and Al raised their voices. Apparently they received a penalty due to the decrease of satiety. Seeing that, the 【Material Merchant】 decided what to teach them first.

"Then, first thing we'll teach you is the management of your status."

In response to Emilio's declaration, I passed some of the 【Atelier】's sandwiches to the two and calmed them down.

"Nomnomnom... I absolutely won't forget this humiliation! Seconds please!"

"Rai-chan, you're saying such things again. Ah, me too!"

"You two... don't you have any restraint, geez."

Each sandwich recovers 20% of satiety, and when hands extended for their sixth, Emilio strictly stopped them.

"Just because there are items that doesn't mean you have to use them all. Set at least one aside and keep it in your inventory."

"What, this is mine! I won't be taking any orders from you."

"No, they're my sandwiches in the first place."

Emilio spat out a tired sigh in response to Raina's aggressive attitude.

"Well, fine. I guess the little brother will properly listen to my advice right?"

She tilted her head lightly, and with the face hidden behind the mask she made a smile that only extended to her mouth. Scared by that expression, Al acknowledged by nodding time after time.

"I see. Now that you stuffed yourself until bulging, let's start collecting items."

"Haa?! Why. It's leveling first right?"

"That's fine by me but... do you have consumables to use to continue fighting?"

"I don't need that."

"Maybe. Raina using a spear might have no problems, but what about Al who's a mage? Once he's out of MP he'll just be beaten up you know? You need to think about using time to recover, so fighting mobs while looking for items is the most efficient way. It's critical for a party to match their pace."

Hearing Emilio's logic Raina went silent. Seeing that I thought that's decided and proceeded with preparations by setting up base in the field.

The place we're in currently, was one of the safety areas to the west of the first town. Although mob encounter rate is low in here, I have had something to do here that's why I specified this place.

"First, an outdoor crafting base and a portable furnace. I'll need Mixing tools as well. Ah, and a table. I've got the ones Lyly made so I'll take it out... there we go."

Speaking loudly to myself I pulled out two long wooden tables in the safety area and lined up side by side. On top of it I prepared required crafting tools, gradually giving it a proper form.

Seeing that the two siblings were dumbfounded, Emilio advised them amazed.

"Well, that's cause she's a tough player when it comes to survival. This player you're seeing here."

"W-what? Is it weird?"

"Wait wait wait! It's not just weird! Why do you have such things prepared! Are there really players who suddenly build bases in fantasy RPG's?!"

"Is that so? At first I picked up items and continued crafting in a safety area, how nostalgic."

With a distant look in my eyes I saw myself pick up herbs in the forest to craft potions, collect materials for arrows, the times when I had to do my best because of a low cost-performance ratio Senses.

"Don't worry, I won't tell you to imitate me."

"There's no way I would could do that!"

Somehow, it seemed like a connection appeared between Raina and Emilio, maybe they became friends just a little bit.

They looked at each other with strange expressions and were talking about something in low voice. I thought it's good that they aren't fighting, meanwhile Zakuro left the hood and got on top of Ryui who was lying down at the base of a nearby tree.

"Really, when you came to help us you were holding a dagger, but now you're equipped with a bow and yet you used magic! Also, you have a horse and a fox accompany you, as well as some kind of weird tools! Just what on earth are you!"

"Ahh, I can't put it in a word. All you said is true though. Also, it's not a dagger but a kitchen knife, I use it for cooking."

"I didn't ask about that!"

Grahhhh! Raina was frustrated over her capacity and started to roar and Al calmed her down.

"Well, I'm a little of everything. Also, I'm weak in combat. You could call me a jack of all trades I guess?"

"Mm, you could also classify me as a crafter for the time being, most likely."

"Hee, so you were a crafter as well."

"My field is 【Alchemy】 and 【Synthesis】 so it's quite different from normal crafting."

"So 【Material Merchant】 comes from combining materials into better ones?"

"Indeed. Depending on combination a variety of items can be made."

"Is that so! I also have 【Alchemy】 and 【Synthesis】 but I only use it in a specific manner. Does that mean the golem from earlier is a synthetic mob?"

"That's——"Hey! Don't ignore us!"——Sorry about that."

When Emilio and I started a discourse on the crafting Senses, Raina sensed it might take a while and decided to meddle in.

Since I was forgetting about my surroundings, I thought it's good that she stopped us. When I turned my gaze towards Ryui, I saw it stand up and stare at me intently.

"Ahahaha, sorry Ryui."

Hmph, Ryui snorted and lied down again. If I continued to talk like that, I would've probably been head-butted. I imagined it with ease.

"Okay then, I'll go with these children."

"I'll leisurely wait here. I leave gathering to you."

I sent the three off with that.

Now then, let's try a few things as I wait. Even without any material gathering I can make some sweets as I wait.

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"I made a simple one, but will it work?"

I peeked into the small window of the 【Oven Stove】 I obtained during the camp event to see how the pound cake grows.

As I made the sweets made with the use of 【Sweets Factory】's mould that also dropped from the mob in the camp event, a sweet scent has started quietly spread throughout the forest.

"Look! It's stopped with 【Parry】. Al, hit it now!"

"Nh! Ha!"

"Just because your MP ran out, to hit it directly with the staff is..."

Raina held a wooden shield reinforced with leather and metal rivets and held a spear in the other hand. She thrust the spear at the mobs and hit them with the shield.

When the enemy movements stopped, Al used the staff like a stick and hit the enemy time after time with it.

Emilio stood a step behind them with her arms folded and evaluated them.

Bluntly speaking, their cooperation felt nothing but chaotic.

In the first place, as β testers Myu, Sei-nee and Taku as well as their companions were familiar with the game right from the beginning.

So that's how it looks like at the beginning. I wondered, deep in thoughts.

"Even though I saw so many videos and did so much image training! Why won't it work!"

"Rai-chan, your moves are still amazing."

In response to Raina's tired yell, Al retorted while sitting down on the ground and out of breath.

"It's fine if you slowly learn to cooperate. Everybody is like that at first."

"Khhh, how frustrating!"

Raina and Al explored for about 30 minutes. Emilio accompanied them and safely collected items.

"Yun, choose some of the items you need and make the two something."

"Roger. I'll make some potions for them from these herbs."

While the pound cakes were being baked in the oven I started to make potions instantaneously.

I continued to process herbs with hand movements I was familiar with and extracted potions.

As I hummed while making potions, on the side I asked Ryui to create some water and boiled it to prepare tea.

"Uuu, here I'm completely tired and uncool, why is there someone doing such feminine stuff right here... I want to look cool and cute as well."

"Before you start talking about that put these potions in your inventory."

With such remark I passed the two Beginner's Potions.

They're just Beginner's Potions, but I guess they'll change to normal Potions before long.

The two took them reluctantly, but Emilio who saw the potions' effect from the side approached me and asked in undertone.

"Is it fine to give them those? They're Beginner's Potions, but the amount recovered is comparable to normal Potions."

"It's fine. If they raise their level the amount recovered will decrease anyway. In the end, they can't use potions for attacking anyway."

The potions had a recovery amount restrictions. The Beginner's Potions I passed to Raina and Al had the amount they recover greatly reduced after the user's total SP surpasses 10. In the same manner, Potion that's one rank higher has its recovery amount reduced after SP surpasses 30.

As for the High Potions, the recovery limit is not yet known. However, Blue Potions unlike normal potions were not restricted by a limit. Instead, their effect was very weak and required use of many materials, so they had their merits and demerits.

When I fell silent thinking about potions, I suddenly felt a stare.

Depressed Raina raised her face and her gaze focused in a single place.

"...hey, can I touch those two animals? I think I'll feel better afterwards."

Raina who raised her face after drooping down directed her gaze towards the tree under which Ryui and Zakuro were resting.

"They hardly let others touch it. But you're free to try——"

I told her that they aren't accustomed to people, fell silent and poured the made potion into a pot.

"Eh, so it's okay! Then, I won't hold back..."

Without waiting until I finish explaining Raina approached them, but with her presence alone Zakuro climbed on my back and hid in the hood. It's two tails wound around my neck, making me feel sweltering hot.

Ryui quietly stood up and took distance from her.

"What a shame. It seems like they ran away from you."

"Why..."

As Raina stood with an extended hand and in shock, I could hear Al mutter "Again her bad habits come out".

"Zakuro... the black fox is shy and has a fear of strangers. AS for the white horse, it won't let anyone but people close to it touch it."

"Even though it's so fluffy and looks so pleasant to touch, it won't let me touch it... one more time!"

Raina charged at Ryui who took distance from her, but it was naive. Not even Myu managed to catch it so a beginner stands no chance. The moment she approached its body, she was lightly avoided.

Feeling defiant Raina didn't want to lose and thought of making a clumsy feint with her legs, but it was all seen through and continuously avoided. Clearly having it easy with her, Ryui produced situations where she was just a step away from touching it.

And like that, they slipped out of the safety area. One human and one animal ran around throughout the forest.

"Yun-san, Emilio-san, is it fine to leave them like that?"

"Isn't it fine? They'll come back after they're tired."

"There's no need to worry about our Ryui. Sweets are more important than that."

As Al worried about elsewhere, I poured improvised tea for Emilio.

While enjoying the scent of tea that came from the pot, I waited for the pound cakes to grow in the oven.

"Ohh, a little bit longer and they'll be baked."

"No way, to think he'd fulfill the promise so fast..."

"Emilio? Did you say something?"

She seemed to have muttered something, but I couldn't catch it. After that she returned "it's nothing", causing me to tilt my head.

For a while Al fidgeted anxiously, waiting for Raina to come back, but that didn't happen for a while.

Ryui came back after about ten minutes making its way through the forest.

"Ryui?! What happened! Isn't Raina with you?!"

Leaping, Ryui rushed towards me and biting on my clothes it pulled me with it.

"Did something happen to Raina?!"

"That how it looks like. I'll go as well."

Together with Al and Emilio who stood up, led by Ryui we headed towards where Raina was.

In the west, if one doesn't overdo it they won't meet any strong mobs, but I advanced through the forest together with Ryui.

"Time is precious. I'll put on some speed support! 《Enchant》 ——Speed!"

We were running as to match Al's speed, but since it was too slow I put on a speed enchant on him and we sped up all at once.

After proceeding in the south-western direction and going deep enough we arrived at area I haven't been in before.

"There! It's Raina!"

I was the one who raised my voice first. After confirming Raina's appearance in between trees with 【Hawk Eyes】 Sense, I set up my bow.

She was surrounded by a flock of wild dogs. I aimed at the one that looked like it'll jump at her any moment and set course directly at them.

The arrow shot in a manner preventing the animal to avoid it pierced the dog's head. It's body was blown away, it turned into particles and disappeared.

"Al! Yun-san?! And masked woman?!"

Raina turned in the direction the arrow came from, but since a bat has attacked her from overhead I shoot again in rapid succession.

"Rai-chan! You okay?!"

"I'm fine! Rather than that, let's take them down!"

She recklessly brandished her spear, Al properly attacked with magic. Normally, they would prioritize targets, but since they were unable to do so yet I supported them from the distance and Emilio followed up from close range.

As the number of enemies gradually decreased, I saw a creature appear from between the trees and froze.

A massive figure snuck up behind spear-wielding Raina.

"Raina! Behind you!"

"Eh? Kyaa!!"

『"GWAAAAAAAA――"』

Swinging her spear with a strong momentum Raina turned around and looked up at the creature behind her.

More than three metres big, black mob with sharp claws, a Forest Bear swung up both of its arms and roared as if to announce its presence.

"Khh, 《Enchant》 ――Defense!"

I determined that I can't take it down with the bow and cast defense enchant on Raina. Although the bear swung down its claw at Raina, the attack was parried by her shield. Following that, as she was looking up at the Forest Bear, Raina was attacked by its left arm, but a shadow has barged in between them.

Although Emilio tried to block it with her straight sword, its blade has fallen apart and received a hit in the head.

However, a player whose level was higher than Raina and Al, no, even higher than me wouldn't go down in a single hit. Emilio's mask shattered and she stopped after swaying for a moment.

"That's enough, you're a nuisance! Fine, I'll take you on!

《Summon》 ——Bronze Golem, Flame Beast, Ice Beast!"

She threw three stones high up into the sky. Although they seemed like Zakuro's and Ryui's summoning stones, they were slightly different.

"Get him!"

From them, came power that one-sidedly crushed the bear.

The Bronze Golem easily beat down the Forest Bear which was much weaker than the Treant and the two beasts of flame and ice drew away a large number of wild dogs. In addition to that, the pieces from Emilio's broken sword danced in the sky, slicing the bats apart.

"A-amazing."

The amount of strength she possessed despite being solo was unprecedented. Alone she held strength comparable to a party and using it, she eradicated the enemy.

I knew a player similar to her, but the impression that came from the mobs used here was very mechanical in comparison.

"It's over, huh. Are you okay? ...ah...ehh?"

The rampaging mobs have ran out of enemies to defeat and after standing still for a moment were dismissed by Emilio. I watched it as I stood by the three, and saw something unbelievable that made me doubt my eyes.

Emilio's real face that was behind the shattered mask. Her hair color and clothes as well as her voice were different, but her face was spitting image of Endo-san's from my class.

"What is it? Yun."

"Ah, umm..."

When I recognized her as Emilio I didn't feel any discomfort even as she called me without a honorific, but after recognizing her as Endo-san I felt was full of it when referred to without one.

I was at a loss of words faced with Endo-san who tilted her head in a wondering manner

I connected with Emilio directly through a private friend chat.

『"Umm... can it be Endo...-san?"』

Hearing me say that inaudibly, she touched her own face, let out a sigh and crouched on spot.

Raina and Al looked at it anxiously, but soon enough Endo-san raised her face and returned the greeting with a smiling expression.

『"Yes, Shun-kun. Hello."』

In the same manner she replied through friend chat without letting out a sound outside of it.

『"Let's talk about this later."』

『"Got it. Um... there's a lot I want to ask."』

The friend call was disconnected, and Endo-san has already recovered from having her mask broken.

"Um... are you okay?"

"Yes, I'm all right. Thanks for worrying about me, Raina."

After she said that, Raina blushed.

Since Endo-san was hiding her face behind a mask the entire time, seeing her face from the front properly surprised Raina and made her recall how she was saved. She got embarrassed about her rude behavior earlier and fell silent, is how it looked like.

"Since my face was already seen, I don't need this any longer."

After saying so, Endo-san operated the menu to switch equipment. She took off earrings and a bracelet.

Immediately after that, the equipments effect was reversed and noise ran through the name 【Emilio】 as it changed into 【Emily】. Her voice also changed from a mechanical one into her usual one.

——Endo Emily. If I'm not wrong, that's Endo-san's name in real.

"Once again, I'm an OSO player and crafter 【Material Merchant】 Emily. Take care of me."

There was a lot I wanted to ask Emilio, rev. Emily-san, but I was told to do so afterwards through friend chat.

"Still, Raina, why were you surrounded by mobs?"

"Y-yess?!"

Raina raised a slightly panicked voice. She was probably nervous because Emily-san called out to her. Seeing the change in Raina, Emily-san laughed quietly.

"Just explain slowly as we walk."

"That's... I chased after the white horse, before I realized I jumped into a group of mobs. There was a lot of them, I was unable to deal with them or run away and their numbers increased fast."

Since Raina faced down feeling bad about it, I admonished her with a gentle tone of voice.

"This time, since Emily-san and I were here it wasn't a problem, but if you encountered other players it would've turned into MPK you know?"

"Yes."

"Be careful so that it doesn't happen again. Still, you did well to endure against that many. That's amazing, Raina."

When I honestly praised her, Raina made a wondering, blank expression which turned into a sloppy one before long.

"I-is that so. Ehehe... true. Certainly, I might be amazing for not giving up there."

"Oh Rai-chan, you're acting full of yourself again."

Al frankly warned her, but it didn't reach her ears as she was now. I realized that she'll probably blunder again. And as I thought so, Emily-san lightly poked my shoulder.

"Yes? Emily-san."

"Isn't the reason she held out because of Yun-kun's potions? They probably had an excessive amount of recovery for beginners, didn't they."

"Probably. But saying that now would be tasteless, right?"

"Yun-kun's methods won't really pay off. Still, I don't hate that kind of thing."

Good grief, it might be so. I laughed at myself as we returned to the camp made by me.

What I noticed then, was a nasty smell.

Realizing that, as everyone furrowed their eyebrows I yelled alone.

"AAAAAAAA——!"

In a hurry I opened the oven I left alone and what I saw in the mould I pulled out was a pitch black burnt mass.

After much trouble I managed to prepare pound cakes in a satisfying manner, and now they've been burned down.

Harboring a slight hope I scraped off the surface, but it's been firmly burnt and inedible.

As I fell down on my knees and thrust my hands on the ground dejected, Ryui and Zakuro snuggled up to me to comfort me. Emily-san and others felt awkward, not knowing if they should call out to me.

"Ahahaha, I-I just have to make it again, yeah. Yup."

I raised my head and the words I muttered echoed in the space between the trees.

•

"So, why did Endo-san... no, Emily-san do such a thing? What is the meaning behind that equipment?"

『"Do I have to answer that? I have a few tricks up my sleeve..."』

"You don't have to if you don't want to."

Currently, I was talking with Emily-san through the friend chat.

Why was she wearing a mask.

Why has she falsified her name.

Why did she change her voice

There was a lot I wanted to ask, but I didn't intend to inquire deeply.

"Ohh, there it is. I found some crafting materials on the way back."

『"Really, for Yun-kun anything that isn't crafting material doesn't matter, does it."』

"Ahahaha, sorry. But this is very important to me."

On the way back after helping Raina, I actually found one of the materials I was looking for, but since we focused on escaping to a safe place I wasn't able to collect it and have obtained it now.

It was a material for the 【Insect Repelling Incense】 Cloude has asked me for, the 【Bark of the Fragrant Moss Wood】. Moss propagated on the fallen wood, but the material was the bark along with the moss.

I collected a several dozen of it by peeling it off.

The dried bark was a base material for the incense, it was mixed with 【Pyrethrum】 flower that was also dried. After making a clay-like consistence it's been shaped into a bar shape and dried at the same time thus completing 【Insect Repelling Incense】.

I don't know what does Cloude, no, Lyly need a 【Insect Repelling Incense】 for the event he's planning, but I have gathered the required materials for 【Fireworks】 and 【Insect Repelling Incense】.

I made a pleased expression as I explored the forest in the west. I have left Raina and Al with Emily-san and together with Ryui and Zakuro went to gather materials for their potions.

『"You're completely different than you are at school and do things are your own pace, don't you."』

"Mm? Is that so?"

『"Well, that's because you're living a life there conforming to rules... so it doesn't stand out, but you're quite free here aren't you."』

Just now, Emily-san interrupted in the middle to look after Raina and Al, interrupting in the middle probably meant she had to deal with something. Not minding in particular, I listened to what she had to say.

『"Fine already. The reason I disguised myself, let's see. I did it so that I'm not found by acquaintances."』

"Haa, and why is that?"

『"Because it's awkward! An uninteresting class president type of person like me playing games! Moreover, playing a fashionable VR game to top it off, it doesn't suit me at all, right?"』

"I wonder? At first I was surprised, but Sei-nee is also very serious and yet she plays games."

There's no need to mind it that much, speaking of which, I'm the same. I responded.

『"At first, I disguised to avoid Yun-kun and others, but with the recent guild solicitation I put more effort into disguising. The mask is a normal item, but the two other ones are unique, probably joke items."』

As for the mask, it was sold in sets of ten at some stall and had an additional effect 【Receive Pain】 that took over part of the damage dealt to armor. That's why it was fragile, which was also the reason it was used as a method to measure armor durability.

The name and voice changing items were joke items that dropped during the summer camp event. I remember well how Sei-nee's and Mikadzuchi's 【Eight Million Gods】 guild's members showed off the joke items and tricks during a party back then.

"As I thought, guild solicitation is ongoing everywhere. I escaped from malicious solicitation as well."

『"In a sense, at least on the surface it can be said that we're both victims of guild solicitation. Although it wasn't that severe in my case. Also, sorry for calling you without honorific."』

"There's no need to worry. I also referred to you without honorific, well at least your pseudonym."

『"Also... you've had a desire to transform yourself after all."』

"I didn't! This is a bug! Character edit's body correction's misidentification! Heck, what's up with 'after all'! C'mon, what is it?!"

When I grandly retorted in inaudible voice in the middle of the empty forest, from the other side of the friend call I've heard a strange, quiet laughter.

『"I didn't think you would deny that strongly. Still, it suits you."』

"That doesn't make me happy at all."

After saying that I fell silent as not to let my bad mood show.

The call with Emily-san wasn't disconnected, we just fell silent for a moment. And then, I asked Emily-san something I suddenly recalled.

"There's something I'd like to ask... is the reason why you stare at Taku, explore how to talk to him and know about videos with him because——you like Taku?"

『"Haa?! No such thing! Absolutely not."』

"E-eh?"

Even though she inquired so meaningfully earlier... so it was my misunderstanding.

『"The reason I was bothered is because I didn't want to meet him. It'll be troublesome if I'm found out to be a player right? It has nothing to do with love!"』

After hearing Emily-san deny strongly, I let out a sigh of relief.

"Is that so."

I muttered and it turned silence. Afterwards, I spoke from my side again.

"Um, let's end this topic. For some reason it feels like I'm bringing trouble on myself."

『"You're right. I won't touch the subject of Yun-kun being of different sex in OSO in relation to Taku-kun."』

Both of us were convinced, "let's change the topic" said Emily-san.

『"Then, let me ask this time. Why were you on the south of the wetlands, Yun-kun?"』

"Ah, acquaintance crafter asked me to craft an item and I was collecting materials for it."

『"In that case, do you have any of the items called 【Magical Organism's Catalyst Metal】? If possible I'd like you to give it to me."』

"Ah, if it's that then I have a few, I got some when I was hunting with my little sister and others."

That's great, I wasn't able to defeat it. Her happy voice resounded.

"So the reason Emily-san was there was..."

『"That's right. But alone I don't have enough forces to take down Darkman."』

Hearing her say 'forces' rather than 'strength' I felt like her strength came from the summoned mobs rather than from herself.

Well, fighting off Darkman would be easy, but Emily might have been incompatible with defeating it.

While talking with her like that on the move, I came back to the safety area and tried arranging the materials I already had and materials I obtained to try making 【Fireworks】.

If I want to do it properly I'll calmly do it in the workshop, but if the strength of the effect doesn't matter it's fine to do it outside with a portable crafting kit.

"Now then, see you later Emily-san."

『"Sure, I'll gather some materials while leveling with the two for a while."』

Try not to overdo it, I thought as the call was disconnected and confirmed the material in front of me. To make 【Fireworks】 I needed to craft intermediate materials first.

First one was a Damage Potion. To make it I needed to use Frog's Stomach that dropped from Moor Frogs and Strongly Acidic Jelly that dropped from the Mold Slimes.

I minced the stomach, added a little bit of distilled water and ground it well. Then I added Strongly Acidic Jelly and filtered it.

I removed impurities and heated up the yellowish liquid, it concentrated and thickened.

If I used the 【Atelier】's condenser it would be faster, still, by carefully decreasing the moisture and bottling it, Damage Potion was completed.

Damage Potion 【Consumable】

HP Damage【-30 (± 5】

It was quite poorly made, but in the end it's only a intermediate material and a prototype at that. I wasn't really bothered with the amount of damage. However, assuming a failure I made a larger amount of the damage potion before turning off the fire in the surroundings.

Next, I made another intermediate material, a bomb——or to be precise, I wanted to create the first step to it, an explosive ball.

What I prepared was Phosphorous Soul Crystal I got from the Wisp and Black Exploding Stone I dug up from the ground. Neither of them had any effect by itself, but after mixing them it turned dangerous.

"Ignition checked. Let's do this."

Normally I would grind them in the machine for grinding ore in the workshop, but this time I did steadily.

As the Phosphorous Soul Crystal was soundly crushed and broken down it turned into a silky powder that diffused light like glass.

On the other hand Black Exploding Stone changed into a clay-like moist black powder akin to soil.

For the real thing I would be mixing it as to maximize bomb's damage, but since I was making a explosive ball for the fireworks, I used a slightly larger amount of Phosphorous Soul Crystal. I did fine adjustments weighting the two before mixing, and then shaped a single clay-like mass into a ball.

Explosive Clay 【Consumable】

While it still wasn't complete, I cut off part of the explosive ball and stowed the rest in the inventory.

"Oh? Yun-san. What are you doing?"

"Mm? I'm making explosives."

When I responded to Al's question, both his and Raina's movements stopped in the middle of coming towards me.

Although the two came back from hunting together with Emily-san, only Emily-san approached as if nothing.

"That's an item I haven't heard of. What kind of thing it is?"

"You could call it a joke item or role-playing one. Wait a second."

I took the bottled Damage Potion and poured it into the container once again and put in a single piece of metal. The metal dissolved inside of the potion.

When I soaked the Explosive Clay piece I cut off in the damage potion that had melted a piece of metal, the yellowish colour of the liquid gradually weakened.

After a while I pulled out the wet Explosive Clay from Damage Potion that turned colorless and transparent, dried it and reformed it into an Explosive Ball.

If I used Rapid Drying skill of skill of 【Dosing】 as a finishing touch, I would complete explosive ball from Damage Potion and Explosive Clay.

After collecting all the stuff and putting it together, it has become a Fireworks' Explosive Ball.

"I'll do a small experiment so get away! Zakuro! Help me out!"

In response to my words Zakuro who stayed in a remote location ran up to my shoulder. I showed the Explosive Ball I had between my fingers to Zakuro and instructed.

"I'll throw it into the sky, put it on fire when it's high up, okay?"

"Kyuu!" After hearing a short and clear response I pat Zakuro with my free hand and said "let's go".

I strongly threw the Explosive Ball into the sky like I usually do with Potions and Magic Gems and Zakuro lit it up with fox fire.

The minimal amount of fireworks that went up towards the sky in the bright daylight bloomed in the open space between trees.

It didn't show up as a clear cyan color, but it has certainly flowered in color on the sky before disappearing.

"Ohh, it was properly colored. But the color was still pale. Is it because Damage Potion was too strong and coloring dissolved, or maybe because too much metal was put in? Also, by changing the type of metal I can change colors. Well, I need to talk about the request with the client about this. In some cases even explosives made from Explosive Ball can be enough."

As I muttered to myself, Raina and Al in front of me froze after seeing what happened. Emily-san smile wryly and said "the sight might have been too much for beginners".

"Did you finish your work?"

"About half of it, I guess? I think I'll do the rest later."

"Is that so. Then, can I get what we talked about earlier? How about some barter trade for materials I have with me? As 【Material Merchant】 dealing with 【Alchemy】 and 【Synthesis】 I can provide enough materials for that."

Seeing Emily-san wink I saw she was in a good mood and I took out 【Magical Organism's Catalyst Metal】 from the inventory.

"You sure managed to get lots from a single hunt. I got a piece here and there off the market, but since it mainly flows to the players with 【Smithing】 it wasn't enough. It'll be finished with these."

Certainly, if one gathered up 【Magical Organism's Catalyst Metal】 and made it into ingots it would become a random different metal ingot. That's why players with 【Smithing】 and 【Workmanship】 were gathering them.

From what I heard, I've heard it was possible to get a Mithril Ingot and such.

"Are you satisfied with this?"

"Hmm, yeah. In that case, choose 30 pieces of the material I took out in exchange. Anything is fine."

Interested, Raina and Al also took a look at the materials taken out by Emily-san, but having no idea about their applications they lost their interest soon enough.

I checked on them one after another and considered if I'm able to use them. Among them, there were some like Fine Iron Ore and Hobgoblin's Horn I knew how to create.

Since there were few of herb-based materials I gave up on them and took a different one in my hand. And then when I picked up an item called Element Stone, info about skill acquisition has appeared in front of me.

——After fulfilling a condition an 【Enchant】 skill has been unlocked. After surpassing level 30 of 【Enchant】 and getting in contact with an item consumable by the skill, 《Element》-type enchant has been unlocked.

"...?!!"

I froze, still holding the item.

Immediately I selected the menu with usable skills and selected skills available under 【Enchant Arts】 Sense.

There was the basic 《Enchant》. Weakening 《Cursed》. 《Skill Enchant》 that put a skill inside of the item and 《Item Enchant》 that provided additional effect.

And the new, fifth enchant skill 《Element Enchant》.

It was a type of skill that consumed an item. In a sense, it was similar to how 【Bow】-type Senses consumed arrows.

"What happened, Yun-kun?"

"End... Emily-san. Is that all the Element Stones you have?"

I was so shaken I almost called her 'Endo-san' before restraining myself and asked her as nothing happened. Emily-san looked at me questioningly for a moment before answering.

"That's my exclusive... probably not, but it's one of the recipes I completed. It's a consumable that raises power of the corresponding elemental magic. Can it be that you want the recipe?"

"Truth be told, I want it badly."

"No can do. But I can prepare them so you can purchase them at my place."

It can't be helped then. I let out a sigh and told her that I want 10 each of the elements she had with her.

Fire, water, wind and light, there were four elements, but since I was taking 30 pieces of material in exchange it would exceed trade by 10. It couldn't be helped, I had to raise some funds first and purchase it the other day since I exhausted my money on the Mini Portal.

However, seeing me act reluctantly, Emily-san made a proposal.

"If you want, I'm fine with exchanging them for materials other than 【Magical Organism's Catalyst Metal】. Let's see... do you have bad status inducing drugs? Like poison or paralysis."

"If that's the case, then I do. What will be the balance?"

"As for rate... how about 1 for 1?"

Fine then. I passed five pieces of poison and paralysis drugs each and strength of 3 to Emily-san, in exchange I got a total of forty Element Stones instead.

Emily-san made a satisfied smile as well and she took out a synthesis kit and spread it out.

"Actually I needed it in order to complete an unfinished recipe. Right now I'm synthesizing drops of strong poison-type mobs but the success rate is below 1%, I wonder how will pure poison work."

Emily-san selected two-way synthesis, then put on a throwing knife consumable and the poison I passed to her earlier.

It was a simple concept. Put poison even on a poor weapon and you'll be able to defeat the enemy.

A light leaked from the synthesis circle and two items have come together, dissolved and formed a single item.

Poisonous Throwing Knife 【Consumable】

ATK+7 Additional Effect : Poison 1

"As I thought, the success rate is high when a proper poison is used... oh. But 【Poison 1】 is quite weak isn't it."

"Then how about we check the poison strength? I'll take out poison of each level."

"Really? Thank you, Yun-kun."

Emily-san and I talked with each while smiling. In front of us poison and throwing knives were lined up, and together we continued to synthesize the knives and poisons.

"T-that's scary! Having two beauties smiling with poison between them is scary!"

"Let's give up. We'll only end up being poisoned."

Raina and Al said something rude as we amused ourselves with discussion about crafting. This was very important.

Well, putting the two aside, we tried a few times to make a sample, and as we examined the laws behind synthesizing knives and poison I made notes.

A knife synthesized with a bad status Poison 3 drug resulted in Poison 1's Throwing Knife. Based on this, I made two hypotheses.

First, when synthesizing all of the bad statuses end up as strength 1.

Second, toxicity decreases a several times after synthesizing.

To confirm this we synthesized drugs of various strength and checked whether synthesis succeeded or failed.

The result was that synthesis with poison up to 2 failed, and synthesizing of Poison 4 proved that second hypothesis was true and the poison has gotten weaker.

Synthesizing Poison 4 resulted with Poison 2's Throwing Knife.

"Since it's a consumable, that means my arrows can be synthesized with bad status as well."

"That would make Yun-kun really nasty. You'll be able to one-sidedly put bad status on people from a long distance."

Is what she said, but it wasn't that easy.

If the other party has a high DEF and MIND stats or resistance Senses, bad statuses can be resisted or mitigated. That's why strength of level 2 was barely usable in the battle.

Also, potions and arrows or throwing knifes contacted with the target's surface area differently which was a problem as well.

"Emily-san, you know that bad statuses wouldn't make me that superior in the first place right? If it's Emily-san, you'd be able to easily shield yourself by using that golem as a shield."

"Fufu, I guess."

Non-biological and magical-biological mobs like golems were completely immune to bad statuses in the first place.

However, there were few 【Bow】-type Senses users, and while it was very simple concept, only a few people used it. The first impression one would get, is that it would be used for surprise attacks against other players.

Poison was highly effective if thrown from a close range and the effect of poisoned arrows shot from a distance was low. Each of them had their disadvantages, I thought.

'Well then, let's take a break, after that let's go hunt again. This time I'll join as well."

"Y-Yun-san? Can it be that you'll be using those poisoned arrows?"

"Of course? There's lots I won't know until I try using them."

"That's true. Whether I sell it or use myself, I don't want to compromise."

Emily-san also agreed and after synthesizing a number of poison arrows I joined the hunt.

The only thing we learned, was that the enemies in this area are too weak and they die before the bad statuses can be even applied.

Chapter 5 - Wisteria Peach Petals and the Cornerstones

After learning Emily-san's identity, along with the two beginners we have created a party of four and played together for a few days on hunting spots with few players in it.

At times I accompanied them in hunting, I remade pound cakes or played with Ryui and Zakuro. I enjoyed activities no different from ones I enjoyed in the 【Atelier】.

Eh? I don't think this is what 'disappearing' means, maybe.

『"So, Yun, what's your current situation?"』

"Oh, for the time being I partnered up with a player I met during the disappearance and we stay in a place with few people."

『"On this side we're doings lots of stuff to finish the matter of guild solicitation. We'll probably manage to settle it before the event."』

"Well, I'll be waiting patiently then."

It was a friend call from Cloude. Since I was currently hiding and couldn't meet him directly, I was contacting with 【Crafting Guild】 members this way to exchange information.

Last time it was Magi, and before that, Lyly.

"After I come back to 【Atelier】 I plan to craft 【Fireworks】 and 【Insect Repelling Incense】, want to hear about the progress?"

『"Please."』

"I thought that the 【Fireworks】 have to be colored beforehand, but I can just deliver 【Exploding Balls】 and you can decide yourself what kind of fireworks you want. How about it?"

『"Hmm. Certainly, rather than have you decide all the fireworks alone, leaving it to a number of crafters will be more interesting. Let's do that then."』

"Then, I'll deliver the 【Exploding Balls】 colorless. Also, the 【Insect Repelling Incense】 is progressing well so far."

『"So far?"』

"It'll take some time until it's complete."

The procedure of crafting 【Insect Repelling Incense】 was to crush 【Bark of the Fragrant Moss Wood】 into powder and mix it with dried 【Pyrethrum】.

It was simple so far, but it has become similar to wood chips so far and had yet to be compacted and moulded with thermal compression.

After moulding is finished it has to be dried in the shade, currently, I was waiting for this last step to complete.

"——So, I'll make for the delivery date, but it'll take time."

『"I see. Then there's no problems. Well, take care."』

"Sure, you too."

Slightly worried about each other, we disconnected from the chat.

Fuu, I sighed and spoke towards the sky.

"Settling the matter of guild solicitation... heck, what are they doing! I was too scared to ask."

During the chat with Magi-san and Lyly they said the same thing, I thought of asking Cloude, but the conversation centered on the order and I didn't have a chance.

"Yun-kun, were you called by someone again?'

Emily-san who was close by asked the moment I closed the friend communication with Cloude.

"Ah, yeah... this time it was about the item delivery."

Other than that, there were people who contacted me worried by the fact I don't appear in the store. In those cases, I have politely responded to each person explaining that I'm in the middle of laying low.

"You're really loved by everyone, Yun-kun."

In response to Emily-san's mutter, I went "is that so?" and tilted my head.

The twins, Raina and Al didn't have interest in it, instead, they were nearby, reflecting on potion replenishment and cooperation during battle.

And when I was about to speak to Emily-san, once again a friend communication has come. I checked who was the caller.

"What on earth. Just a moment passed... ah, it's from Taku."

In response to my murmur, the gently smiling expression Emily-san had so far stiffened. Raina and Al also looked my way curiously.

"Yun-kun, I think you know already but..."

"I won't leak anything about Emily-san."

Exactly, thanks. While looking at still anxious Emily-san I connected to the chat with Taku.

"What is it? For you to contact me... you know that I'm in middle of disappearance right?"

『"I'll tell you my request straight up. I want you to process 【Wisteria Peach Petals】."』

"...hey, they're a revival item right? Why do I have to process it?"

『"Oh, I see. So you still don't know."』

As I heard Taku talk as if he was all-knowing, I recalled the harm done to me by the low level video of his and once again resolved myself to punch him.

"So, what is it. If you've nothing then I'm ending the call here."

『"Ah, sorry. Earlier I've heard that some revival medicine was made with 【Wisteria Peach Petals】. Well, they're incomplete low quality stuff though."』

"About that, can you tell me in more details?"

So far I've heard only half of what Taku had to say, but I got immediately fired up.

『"I thought you'd be interested. That being said, the recovery amount of the reviving medicine is unchangingly 1 HP."』

"Wait a second. If I'm not wrong Wisteria Peach Petals also resurrect at 1 HP. There's no difference at all right?"

Eh? Didn't I explain you in detail? And so Taku tilted his head on the other side of the friend chat.

『"There's a big difference between petals and reviving medicine."』

"No, I don't understand what you mean here..."

Since one way or another I couldn't get a grasp, Taku gave me a simple example.

In the case of Wisteria Peach Petals, if a Player A falls, Player B can use them to resurrect Player A, but the Player A can't use his own petals from the inventory to resurrect himself. It's a type of item that allows you to resurrect others.

On the other hand, in case of revival medicines, if Player A falls, he can revive himself by using a revival medicine in his inventory. Moreover, just like petals it can be used on other players.

『"That's why, to use petals multiple people are required."』

"I see. Well, that's a huge difference. Rather than that, why do you need it all of a sudden?"

『"Oh, I thought of joining the crafter's event's PvP tournament! For that, I intend to secure as much reviving medicine as possible."』

"That, do rules even allow it? Doing such a thing in a PvP tournament."

If they allow revival drugs like that, it won't matter how hard it is...

『"About that, if things like items for throwing, HP recovery and MP Potions get restricted, power balance will crumble. That's why they'll be allowed."』

For real? Even though I thought like that, I guess it's certainly unavoidable.

"Got it. If I have an answer I'll call you back. Gonna disconnect now."

『"Yeah, I leave it to you."』

I turned off the chat and turned towards Emily-san, Raina and Al.

But, what should I say. In order to punch Taku at least once I need to meet him, but leaving in the middle of helping out beginners...

"What are you bothered about. You were called out right? And by that Taku-san no less."

"Yeah, that's true but..."

"Please go on! And bring some stories about Taku-san back!"

Pure gazes of Raina and Al were brilliantly dazzling.

Saying "leave this to me" with a wry smile, Emily-san pushed my back. "But don't say anything about me", her eyes weren't laughing at all as she said that.

"Got it. But before that..."

I needed to properly support the beginners, Raina and Al.

"All right, it might be a bit early but I'll pass you Potions that are above Beginner's Potions. Also, I'll make you some simple bronze rings from the ore we've collected. And, as for the stones we've gathered, I'll make some Enchant Stones out of them. You can ask Emily-san about the method of use. Also..."

"Yun-san! it's fine, just go!"

Seeing me take out items one after another to support the beginners, Raina yelled. And then, with a slightly irritated tone of voice she pressed on my back, trying to send me away by force.

"Yun-san, we're not children."

"But..."

"it's fine, go! There's no need to worry!"

"If something happens contact me immediately!"

"Are you our guardian or what?! There's no need to worry, we won't cause people any more trouble!"

"So Rai-chan knows she's causing people to worry."

Well, if Al is there to retort then it'll be fine I guess.

"Really. Like this, it's no wonder you got a nickname like 【Nanny】."

I made unconvinced expression in response to Emily-san's words and sighed.

However, unable to remain on spot forever, I left the party.

In order to secretly return to the 【Atelier】 I logged out once, then used the starting point I had set in the workshop.

Usually I used the Mini Portal to go out like this, by doing this procedure I could move around without using either the 【Atelier】's entrance or normal portals.

After coming to the 【Atelier】 I made preparations to meet Taku and called back to him.

The reply has come soon enough and I was able to invite Taku into the workshop part before long.

"Yo, I was waiting."

The moment Taku appeared I took a step forward. I twisted my waist and strongly sank low gathering my entire body's energy to hit Taku's amused face with a right straight.

"Woah, what's this. A sudden greeting."

Because of his strange video, I've had to deal with the aftermath of beginner players trying to imitate him, thus I punched him to repay for that, but he lightly caught my fist with his hand.

I have sank into a bad mood, displeased at my own low stats and being easily stopped. I immediately released strength in my arm and Taku let me go.

"Sorry, made you wait. So, let's talk in details now."

When I spoke as if nothing happened, Taku tilted his head in wonder and joined in.

"As I said through the friend chat, I want you to make revival medicine from the 【Wisteria Peach Petals】."

"With that said, I need quite a few of them."

"That's why let's go and pick some up! Rather than alone, we'll pick up more the two of us, I'll leave all I get with you for research purposes!"

"Don't be unreasonable. Do you think I could make it so easily without a recipe or information on other materials?"

"That's why I'm relying on your intuition and Senses."

As Taku come at me with such baseless confidence, half of me wanted to live up to it and the other half felt a bit oppressed. Well, this time his timing was good.

"I don't know who's the one to make the reviving medicine, but I was already examining the unfinished recipe."

"Why didn't you say anything."

"I thought that a request for revival medicine will come sooner or later so I was making preparations. I thought of telling the first person who approached me about the recipe."

It was one of the recipes not even Magi-san and the others knew about.

I took out notes I gathered by using 【Linguistics】 Sense. OSO's mixing recipes are something that summarize blending ratios and couldn't be readily shown to others. It was one of my advantages.

"Yun, just where did you gather that information."

"I'm a crafter. My home ground is the entire town including this store and material field. Well, it's a by-product of searching for another recipe in the library and I don't know the procedure yet."

"That's why it's an unfinished recipe. So, what are the materials?"

"Trade secret. Well, honestly speaking, I'm short on the materials. I can't find one of the four. That's why, look for the material in question in parallel with 【Wisteria Peach Flower】 gathering."

I had two materials on hand and had 【Wisteria Peach Flower】 collection scheduled now. However, as for the last material, I didn't know anything about it other than its name.

"The item I want you to look for is——the 【Water of Life】."

"Roger that. Then, let's go gather the peach petals later... ohh right, you still haven't passed through the Horror Cave haven't you, you need to go through it at least once."

"I didn't say a single word about going there myself to collect materials."

"Well, it's fine isn't it. On the other side of the cave there's a portal for transition."

I glared at Taku, and was stared at with half-closed eyes in response.

"Why are you so reluctant in the first place, Yun."

"Um, that's..."

"Horror Cave's mobs aren't that strong."

"Uhh... so, that 'horror' name is what I hate!"

"What is it, snapping all of a sudden."

"Khhh... it's not sudden. I don't want to go to that Horia Cave."

I really didn't want to, but it was true that I had to pass through there sooner or later.

It's official name was 'Horia Cave', but since ghost-type mobs appeared in there it was called 'Horror Cave'.

To reach the Wisteria Peach Tree, players had to move on a road from the Second Town and go to the branching in the middle of it to enter the Horia Cave. Then, after going through an abandoned village portal was in, there was a tree growing on top of the hill.

Taku should have known that I'm not good with ghosts.

"Give up. I'll be there as an escort. Also, if you get to the abandoned village, you won't have to pass through there again. It's just once. And, taking your level into account it should be easy. No problem."

"Got it, but I'm still doubtful about it. I'll be going off for a while, I'll contact you after I eat."

"Roger. I'll take a break as well, I'll come to 【Atelier】 in the afternoon again."

With that said, we logged out and returned our consciousness to real.

After logging out, I got up from the bed and with a heavy feeling I prepared lunch.

Today's lunch was meat spaghetti, instant corn soup and raw vegetable salad.

Since onions remained from the last time I made gratin with tomatoes and minced meat, I added it together to white wine I used instead of cooking wine, tomato ketchup and placed plenty of it on top of the pasta. Then I added some parsley, mixed and it was complete.

The soup and salad were simple to make and could be easily prepared while pasta was being boiled.

As I was preparing the lunch, a certain person came down from the second floor.

"Good morning〜, Onii-chan."

"Good morning. Hey, it's already lunch. You're lazing around just because it's a holiday? Didn't you sleep too much?"

"It's okay it's okay. Sleep time's same as always... about four hours. I just went to sleep late."

Hey-hey, your lifestyle's madness. It was more or less noon when she woke up. Normally Miu's sleep time was varied from six to seven hours. That means she usually goes to sleep at four or five o'clock. Until then she's probably endlessly hunting in the night.

It's not something that impresses me as her brother.

"Try living in proper hours, you're missing breakfasts too..."

"But you know, during the weekdays there isn't any people late at night so I adventured until late with acquaintances. Playing in a party is more efficient when aiming for higher levels."

"Good grief... worry about your health before efficiency. Hurry up wash your face and dress yourself."

"Yee〜s."

When Miu disappeared into the washroom making loud sounds with her slippers I let out a sigh and snuck in a generous amount of spaghetti to compensate for the breakfast.

After a while, together with Miu who washed her face and was refreshed we sat down by the table.

"Yaay! Meat spaghetti! There's a lot of cheese powder so it's delicious. Can I ask for carbonara tomorrow?"

"Maybe next time. I have ingredients for tomorrow already stocked up."

"What are you doing in the afternoon Onii-chan? If you're still in the hiding, then how about going to an unpopular area with me? Like, to a mine dungeon with orc-type mobs, it's moderately hard."

"Ah, no can do. I've got a prior engagement."

When I said that, Miu narrowed her eyes and her gaze turned sharp.

"Oh-hoh. A prior engagement huh... hmm, with whom?"

"No, just for a little while——in the game..."Wait a moment. I'll guess it."...okay."

Is it that? But... considering the circumstances... Like that, Miu tilted her head and tried to predict with whom I'm meeting.

"There's a low probability of Onii-chan extending the circle of his friends. That would mean... from the people who're on holiday today——the favorite would be Takumi-san. Runner up, would be crafting activities you want to prioritize. For the black horse, Cloude-san, maybe?"

"...correct. I was invited by Takumi."

"Hmm hmm. Can I join? It seems more fun than looking for a party."

"Ahh, I'll be calling Takumi after the meal, so I'll ask for his consent."

We talked about silly things the two of us, and after the lunch I mailed Takumi to ask and got "by all means" as a reply.

Since Takumi and Miu have apparently occasionally teamed up together in the game, their cooperation could serve as a reference. Also, Miu not only would become a strong escort, but her brightness could be a little bit calming in a dark cave.

In that meaning, I was very grateful to Miu for coming with us.

•

After I logged in through the unchanging OSO's introduction screen, I stood in the 【Atelier】.

"Sorry, I'm late."

"No, I was about to explain everything in details to Myu-chan."

"Onee-chan wouldn't tell me this interesting stuff no matter what!"

"No, it's part business so..."

"Well then, call Ryui and Zakuro, come on, hurry."

"It can't be helped."

I muttered and when I summoned the two young beasts, Myu embraced the two that appeared enjoying herself.

Every time they appeared, she pat and hugged them.

At first they resisted and sought my help, but as I was unable to save them from Myu's devil hands they have accepted the current situation and gave up.

Let's pretend I didn't see them look into the distance as they were stroked.

"Haafuu... it's unfair after all! But I'm satisfied."

While Myu made a wonderful smile, Ryui and Zakuro slipped away tiredly.

"Since Myu-chan's already satisfied, let's confirm everything. We have two goals today. Successfully deliver Yun to the abandoned village's portal and search for the material Yun needs for revival medicine. No problems so far right?"

"No problem! Let's go!!"

Myu swung her fist grandly. On the other hand, I already thought of the Horia Cave and was disheartened.

Exhausted Ryui and Zakuro comforted each other as if they were licking each other's wounds.

During the journey up to the cave, there was nothing in out of order.

We jumped to the portal in the Second Town and advanced while defeating mobs that appeared on the road.

Mobs that appeared on the main road were Fairy Panthers and Fur-ball Demons that had a setting of plundering fields, we defeated them but...

Since Myu with a kill-on-sight attitude lightly cut everything down together with Taku, I was able to journey safe and comfortably.

"Ahahaha, you're too strong and we proceed really fast... I wonder if I'm really needed here."

"Then at least put enchants on yourself. Also, protect yourself."

"In the first place, Yun will be useless from the moment we enter the cave... right from the beginning, you weren't counted as part of fighting force."

A dry laughter spilled out from me naturally. Ahh, as I thought. Oh dear, my existence is really thin at the moment...

"They're so weak〜. Mine dungeon's orcs or normal dungeon's second floor is closer to being adequate to our level I guess?"

"That would be the case if we were solo, with me and Myu-chan we could go a bit deeper, right. Next time let's choose an area with higher difficulty, how about it?"

"Then, please. Fufufu, I look forward to it."

My best friend and little sister sure do get along well. When it's the three of us, one always can't enter the conversation, and that would be me.

"Can I go back after all? I feel like making some bombs. Also, I hate ghosts."

"Hey! Onee-chan, come back here! You're not a child!"

"It's fine, come on! Don't throw tantrums and complicate this!"

"I don't want to! I'm going back!"

I resisted to a rare extent even if I say so myself, but Myu grabbed my left hand to stop me from escaping.

"Come on, look. We don't know what'll appear so probably put on defense."

"Uuu, I'll remember this. 《Enchant》 ——Defense."

After taking a look if I put on an enchant, Taku dragged me into the cave's interior as if I was a police suspect.

Inside of the Horia Cave, it was dark and there was a spine-chilling cold. The cold caused goosebumps on my skin and every breath felt cold, painful and heavy.

And above all——

"Uwaaaa! Ghost's voice wailed just now."

"It's okay. It was just the wind. Think of it as of sound effect inside of a haunted house."

"Lookkk, there's a soull..."

"That's Zakuro's ball of fire isn't it."

When I saw the fireball float around us, I froze on spot. Zakuro whom I was embracing in the front created a light a ball of fire for additional light which moved together with it, but its flickering has stirred up fear inside of me instead.

"Tch, they came out immediately because Yun made noise."

I didn't even think of asking what has come out.

The sound of wind has mixed with groans and sound of rattling as if something hard collided with the ground. Myu's magic was illuminating depths of the cave

and what I saw through the darkness with my 【Hawk Eyes】 were red, eerily shining eyes.

"Uuu..."

"It's not that scary, right. This kind of thing..."

The undead-type mobs, Zombies and skeletons have crossed the boundary of the light and darkness, moving closer to us.

Taku spoke as if nothing and hit the approaching skeleton with his knuckle guard, the skull noisily rolled down on the ground. Next was a Zombie, Taku slashed sharply which made its upper and lower half bid an eternal farewell.

The Zombie's upper and lower half that fell to the ground moved by themselves, that sight alone caused my spirit to be scrapped off bit by bit. The skeleton also moved even without its head.

Both of the Zombie's halves crawled around on the ground.

Seeing them unfazed by being cut and hit, looming towards us without putting up a guard despite being attacked has fueled my fear.

Unlike the Wisp, I was unable to communicate with them, they one-sidedly attacked.

Moreover, after being defeated they were strangely realistic and scary. Why are they dying after having parts of their bodies like arms cut off?

"Myu-chan!"

"Affirmative. Ryui, you can do it too right! ——《Sol Ray》!”

Myu and Ryui shoot light to a remote location. A ray of heat was released from Myu, and from Ryui came a veil of purification that came from above at the undead.

The blazing light beam of Myu's extended in a straight line towards the back of the cave and caused the undead to burn in intense flames, then turn into particles of light. Ryui's purification caused the undead to gradually crumble like sand as they floated peaceful expressions.

"Undead's weakness is stuff like light and purification, so Ryui will contribute much more than Yun. Still, they were burned clean, Zombies and skeletons that is."

"Look Onee-chan. No need to be afraid, don't be scared. They all disappeared and it's all clean."

Just how grateful I was for Myu's presence who held my hand the entire time ever since we entered the cave without letting go.

However, on the contrary, it also meant I was unable to run away from Horia Cave.

"I want to leave this place, and fast."

"Okay okay. Taku-san is in the front and I"m nearby with Ryui. Don't worry."

"Yun, steel yourself. If you don't, you'll become a burden in this cave."

Indeed, I didn't want to become a burden, but I also knew that I don't bring in any strength into the party.

My fear of humanoid horror-like monsters was fading. But even though it was fading, cold and chills didn't change and continued to wrap around me.

If anything, it felt like it's gotten worse compared to when I entered the cave.

It felt as if someone was watching me.

Rather than a single gaze, it felt as if multiple gazes were directed towards me from the entire cave, wrapping around my body heavily.

"Come on, Onee-chan. The more you walk the more we progress."

"I said... I can't."

Every time I tried to take a step forward, my movements have turned sluggish from fear. Being hurried made me further step on brakes and I've become stuck.

That's when the light source Myu made with her light magic started to blink and the luminosity began to weaken.

"Taku-san! A Specter came!"

"Got it. Safety measures then."

Slipping through the wall, appeared a translucent spirit body called Specter. Eroding the light in the cave it floated in the air.

My eyes were bound by the figure that swayed like a willow and my heart started to beat powerfully.

And, the moment my enchant has expired an invisible darkness approached me.

"——I'm going back! I don't want to be here!"

"Onee-chan!"

I shook off Myu's hand and hid my head with both my arms. Zakuro whom I was holding with one hand jumped out at the same time and ran up Ryui's back.

"Taku-san! Onee-chan got caught completely!"

"Tch, got caught huh. He forgot to put on an enchant. Myu-chan, I leave the spirit Spectre to you. I'll take a look at Yun."

Myu's and Taku's conversation felt distant to me.

Now, I was regretting letting go of Myu's hand and holding my head.

My fingers are cold, very cold. No, don't let go. Scary, it's scary, scary... that's right, I'm safe beside Ryui and Zakuro.

I tried blindly feeling through the darkness in front of me and strongly hugged the two animals.

I felt the two's warmth, but that has also made me my hands and cheek feel surprisingly cold. My limbs grew numb and crouching on spot, I shivered.

Gazes I was entangled with that came from all directions were scary.

Feeling fear from not being able to see anything and viscous malice, I swallowed saliva from tension.

It felt like my ice cold body was about to be eaten by the darkness.

And, while thinking of things I didn't want to think of, I noticed something I didn't wanted to notice. In this cave——there were bodies of living beings.

The malice that had no source felt like a thick mucus.

Warmth escaped from my own body, I felt as if I was being digested.

In the end, I'll be eaten out by those Zombies, won't I.

I imagined it for an instant and my fear was roused, my teeth chattered and were grit strongly.

In response to the coldness that felt as if I was thrown into a refrigerator and sound of my own teeth resounding in my skull, I started seeing an illusion of becoming a skeleton myself.

I have already melted away and became a skeleton.

"Tch, 【Confusion】's level is growing fast. Come back to your senses with the Awareness medicine!"

I don't want to hear anything. I don't want to know anything. Cold entered my body and I was being filled with fear alone. When a cold liquid was poured over me it felt relieving for some reason.

I wonder why? My ears that refused to hear anything started to pick up sounds, although my thinking was hazed, I was able to properly hear.

"...Yun! Get a hold of yourself"

"Ta...ku? My-u."

My dis-focused eyes saw the two.

There was Myu releasing bullets of light from her hand as she faced a semi-transparent ghost drifting in the air.

Dozens of Specters were staring towards us, they looked as if they were about to cover the entire cave. However, they didn't attack all at once, a few of them attacked at once and they were all taken out by Myu in a single blow.

"Come on, one more. Awareness drug!"

"What, ho..."

A glass container was pushed into my mouth forcefully and a liquid has flowed down my throat.

As not to let me choke, it was poured down my throat and then moved away from my mouth to let me breathe. Spilled liquid flowed down my chin and to my throat before being drawn into the clothes on my chest.

And then, at the same time as I realized how shameful I appeared, my thinking has cleared up.

"Fuhaa, it's enough. I'm okay now."

"Let's hurry and leave the area with Specters then, that'll be the end."

"Taku-san! Take Onee-chan and go ahead!"

While I was still sitting down, Taku pulled my hand and started running through the cave.

I just continued to proceed being pulled by hand. I tried to look behind worried about Myu and Ryui who were the rearguards, but I was stopped by Taku.

"Don't look behind! Just focus on the front!"

"G-got it."

I obediently followed Taku's instructions and looked away from the back.

Ahead of us we could see the end of the cave from which light was entering.

Just like that, we slipped away from the undead stretching their hands towards us and jumped out of the cave.

Ahead of the Horia Cave's exit spread out an abandoned village. Modest houses built of stone with decayed wooden roofs, a slight feeling of life coming from the abandoned tools.

Of course, it wasn't as dark as the cave. I slowly walked through the abandoned village that had a peaceful vibe, then withered and exhausted I squat down by the portal installed near the fountain.

"...that was scary."

"Been hard on you. I didn't think you would 'catch' it so simply."

"What's up with that 'catching' of yours. Also, what was that back then? What did you make me swallow there."

I stared at Taku, but I didn't notice that since I was looking up at him while crouching down I made upturned eyes.

Laughing he pat my head in a rough manner.

"W-what is it?!"

"Well, I'll explain in order. First, I asked you to increase your defense to protect you from bad statuses."

"Haa..."

After I made a reply that implied I more or less understood, Taku continued.

"The bad status you received was 【Confusion】. At first it was 【Confusion 1】, but after receiving bad status attacks many times you got 2, then it raised to 3, and when I saw it, it was 4."

Thanks to that, it wouldn't go off unless a cure for confusion was used, is what he was saying.

"Was the one who attacked with a BS that semi-transparent Spectre mob?"

"There's that, but going from the start, it's a terrain effect of the Horia Cave."

A terrain effect, simply speaking, it's nature and characteristic of a terrain.

Forests and plains didn't have any nature in particular and not having any characteristics, they were standard.

Taking plains as a basis and to compare them to wetlands, it was slightly difficult to walk through the wetlands and often your legs could sink in. If you think of it as of a terrain effect it would probably be—— 【SPEED Decrease】 I guess.

Other than that, a normal dungeon had variety of traps placed inside, and since it's a cave there was no source of light inside of it, so it was dark by nature.

The difference between day and night can also be considered a natural property.

Although such things could be casually considered terrain effects——

"For Horia Cave's effects, in addition to darkness, there's granting of 【Confusion】 bad status. With that said, since it's a spirit-type bad status, if one raises their MIND it's quite difficult to catch it..."

"So I was unlucky and caught it, have I?"

"No, it was blocked by the defense enchant, but since you received 【Confusion】 immediately after it has expired it means you simply don't have enough MIND."

Disappointed with the fact that I bothered Myu and Taku because of the cave, I slumped.

"Well, depending on one's state of mind it can be difficult to catch it."

"You mean, fighting spirit and guts?"

"Things like that. Well, this time it was quite easy since your movements stopped and you didn't go on a rampage. Also, you were hit by the Specter's apparition wave attack which increased the speed at which 【Confusion】 grew."

"....."

I was told that I won't be of any use, but in fact I became a burden.

If I knew about the cave's nature I might have prepared one or two safety measures in advance, it was a punishment for neglecting information collection.

Before throwing tantrums like "don't want to" "no way", I should have asked about it, possibly avoiding this outcome...

For example, I could acquire a 【Confusion Resistance】 Sense in advance. If I acted level-headed the results might have been a little bit better.

"W-well, don't be so disheartened. Even I didn't think you would catch it. I should have explained it in advance."

"....."

My memories were hazy and I couldn't recall either my miserable, distraught appearance back then and the thinking that became a mess, empty white blank. Just vague fear remained and a discomfort of being unable to recall what I was afraid of.

Because of my naivety and the discomfort, my mood has turned bad.

"I told you, don't go feeling so down. Looking at it from a different perspective, having people like you who could catch it is a good a thing. Game creators want players to feel a realistic atmosphere of a haunted house and a test of courage. For

that, people like you who can catch confusion and get stuck are necessary. If anything, it was a rare and delicious experience."

"...Taku. Are you trying to comfort me, or maybe you're trying to make me angry?"

Laughing at someone else for being bad with something, I'll shoot this guy in the back one day.

"Ohh, your usual expression is back. That's it, that's the expression you should have."

"What is it, what 'expression'."

Even as I grimaced in dissatisfaction, I placed my hand on my face to check. It seemed like my facial muscles have loosened, but I couldn't tell too well.

"Well then, it seems like you have come back to your usual self. It seems like you're all right."

"I want to think I'm all right... hey, wait a sec. I was in a daze up until now so I didn't notice, but Myu isn't here. Ryui too."

One human and one animal who have a valid means of attack towards undead still haven't caught up.

They would let themselves get done in so there was no sense of crisis. I turned my gaze towards the cave's entrance and waited for them to come.

Zakuro too, anxiously turned in the same direction I have.

"Well, Myu-chan must be having fun right? I mean, shooting beams of light at attacking Zombies and Specters."

"No no no, it's not a theme park attraction or a horror FPS, is it..."

However, seeing as they weren't coming out for quite a while, I gradually started to worry.

I was unable to see through the gaping vacant entrance of the cave even with the 【Hawk Eyes】.

"Oh, it seems like Myu-chan has come"

"No, rather than come... how do I say it..."

At first I thought a person came, but gradually the sound of footsteps multiplied, echoing inside of the cave. I furrowed my brows as the dissonance between voices and footsteps grew.

Myu and Ryui came out of the cave jumping, able to visually recognize the two I sighed with relief. Behind them, there were several dozens of monsters.

Evil spirits of mountains and rivers. Seeing a sight similar to a Hyakki Yakou, my face that had its complexion recovered has started to pale once again.

"——Take that!""

At the same time as Myu raised a not-so-feminine yell, the undead chasing her were assaulted by the daylight and suffering agony they gradually burned down.

I faintly recalled Myu coming back while pulling monsters with her before.

However, this time was different as the undead who tried to return to the cave caused a major traffic jam and the undead in the back pushed them outside of the entrance.

After being pushed outside, the undead who lost their refuge from the sunlight have let out agonizing cries, making a hellish sight.

Groaning Zombies, screaming Specters, Skeletons who twisted around to expression their pain.

In response to the sight, Myu made a guts pose as she received a massive amount of drops all at once. Together with Myu, Ryui let out an aura of confidence.

This made the undead seem pitiful instead.

"Somehow, rather than scary, this makes them look pitiful instead."

"Well, small fry mobs are like that."

I welcomed the amount of drops that appeared in my inventory with a melancholic mood.

The undead who avoided being bathed in the sunlight moved away and were stuck in the cave's entrance until the turmoil has subsided.

"I'm back! Also, I brought lots of souvenirs!"

As a result, I acquired a large amount of drops.

The drops from Zombies were rusty, there were Iron Swords and Bronze Sword with 'rusty' attached to their names.

Their performance and durability was lower since they were rusted, but by using 【Smithing】 and 【Engraving】 they can be used to craft ingots. The ratio was roughly two rusted items for an ingot. These were often called hidden mines or mob mines by crafters.

The drops from Skeletons was Bone Powder which could be used as a fertilizer. If it was mixed together with wild grass and soil then spread regularly on the field, the quality of items that can be harvested would grow.

In regards to this, after crafting fertilizer I left it to Kyouko-san and synthetic mobs who put it in when it was appropriate time.

Finally, the Specter's drops were Tears of Soul's Repose.

In exchange for the fact that Zombies and Skeletons did not have any rare drops, Specter's dropped only rare items. However, the probability of items dropping from them was overwhelmingly low.

This time, thanks to Myu's excessive farming two of them have appeared in my inventory.

It was used as a strengthening material for the equipment items, using it on the weapons added 【Undead Slayer】 effect and using it on the armor granted 【Undead Resistance】 effect.

"Good grief, Myu, you're too reckless."

"Ehehe, well. High risk high return is really nice isn't it. Also, buy items I don't need from me."

"Yes yes. Ryui, you did really well to watch over Myu. So admirable."

When I stroked Ryui's mane, it squinted feeling comfortable and acted spoiled, rubbing its neck against me.

"Not fair! I did my best too!"

"Yes yes. You did well, you did your best."

When I pat Myu's head in the same manner, she made a sloppy, smiling expression.

"Ha! Right, I almost forgot! I picked up souvenirs for Onee-chan while at it."

"Ahahaha, so you even picked up the stones in the cave. So that's why you were late to come back."

Suddenly remembering, Myu took out gemstones, ore and stones from the inventory making a mess. Taku picked them up and laughed.

"Taku, don't try to hide it with laughter. Geez, Myu sure loves to worry people."

" "Onee-chan isYou're one to talk." "

"...I'm sorry."

Being told a just argument by both Myu and Taku I fell silent. Soon enough Myu clapped her hands, wiping away the atmosphere of self-reflection, I picked up the items taken out by Myu to appraise them.

Half of the stones picked up in the caves were normal stones, but the other half was lucky.

"It's mostly gemstones and ore. I won't know in detail unless I polish them. Is it really fine if I take it?"

"Absolutely indeed〜."

"C'mon c'mon, let's look for revival medicine materials instead of talking. There isn't any enemies appearing around here, other than under the Wisteria Peach Tree."

"Then, how about there?"

In the direction I was pointing to, there was a path between the trees that continued towards the mountain. It was the opposite direction from the one we could see cherry-colored blossoms dance in.

"Over there's impossible. It's clearly too high level, if you go you'll die for sure. Even I had no idea what was happening and could only run away."

"E-even you couldn't do it, Myu?"

"That's how it is. That's why, unless we approach the mountain or hill, no enemies will appear."

I was convinced with that, and started to search in the middle of the abandoned village and its woods.

That being said, I didn't know the area at all.

"Hey, is there a prominent symbol or object in this area? I feel it might be in a place like that..."

"True. After coming for the first time you won't know what's what so——in the 【Basement】 there's a tapestry with the village's map."

"Speaking of which, there's that. I didn't leave any image data of so I remember it only faintly, but certainly, despite there being a basement under the mayor's house it seems like there's nothing there."

Look, in that house. In the direction Myu was pointing to, there were rotten houses spreading between the portal and the fountain in a semi-circular shape. The biggest house built with stone that had a slightly original form seemed to be the mayor's house.

The two guided me to the mayor's house, while its outside appearance made it seem like it was severely damaged, the inside was surprisingly clean. Although there was dust on the furniture, it was either very strongly made or the house held out better than the others.

"If I'm not wrong, if you go into the room in the back and remove flooring, there should be a basement there."

"Got it. I'll take a look."

I used the 【See-Through】 Sense to examine the location for reactions. When I quickly removed rotten wooden floor parts, a thick wooden door with framework of iron has appeared.

When I opened it by lifting it up, a moldy stench and dust entered my nose and caused the young beasts to escape mayor's house and flee outside, Myu and Taku held their noses.

A rotten air flowed out from the basement, attacking my nasal cavities and in reverse, fresh air flowed inside from the room.

"Myu, I leave the light to you."

"Got that. ——《Light》"

Myu lowered a sphere of light into the dark basement. Peeking in from the entrance I confirmed it's safe and went down using a ladder that was left in there.

In the basement's wide space there were bookshelves and desks, on the wall there was a large tapestry-like embroidered picture map. There was an atmosphere that made it seem like something could be there.

"This is the tapestry map. Can you tell anything?"

"Wait a moment."

Tracing the tapestry map on the wall with my finger, I checked the locations.

In the centre there was the fountain and the mayor's house, there was a road that connected houses in the village which were spread radially.

Other than that, the Horia Cave route we used to come here and the road between the trees towards the mountain were also detailed.

And on the hill with Wisteria Peach Tree, although the colors were fading, there was an embroidery of light pink flowers.

"I see. I've got a grasp on how the village looks like. Also, I'm curious about this mark here, the last material might be there."

While I was checking the tapestry alone, bored Myu ransacked the basement and held out one of the items that were on the bookshelf towards me.

It were wooden strips used as a recording medium, there were a holes in it and a linen string passing through them. They made a clattery sound as I was taking a look at them.

"This, it's one of objects that can't be taken out of this basement. It can't be put in the inventory either, if you try to leave with it, it's going to transfer back into this basement by itself."

"If I'm not wrong, it says 『If you can read this, make sure not to involve yourself with that monster——』."

Taku tried to recite the passage of text from his memory, but it seemed like he didn't remember it in detail.

I switched a Sense with the 【Linguistics】 and looked through the wooden strips.

"Wait, that's wrong."

I read the contents of the wood strip aloud.

What was written on the strips, were words of the village's mayor and fortune teller.

The village's origins. The relationship between the god of land, a giant wolf and the sacrifices. Also, the survival and the crisis of the village. Increasing sacrifices and flowers continuing to bloom.

In spite of the soil being very rich, the village's population decreased. In the end, there were deaths of the young people who stood up against it and a stream of the specters appearing with them.

At the end of was a warning written by the village's fortune teller.

"——『Don't get involved. He is the underworld's gatekeeper』 and that's it."

——【R Quest: Subjugate Wisteria Peach Tree's Giant Wolf】 has been started.

In that moment, we have started an unknown quest.

•

"""……?!!""""

The three of us were startled by the sudden appearance of quest information.

"Hey, Taku. Why did a quest start?"

"I've no idea, there must've been some condition. We did something no one did before."

"Um, not done before. That'd be, deciphering the words left by the mayor? But it was done before. However, deciphering it from a screenshot..."

"Maybe deciphering the object that cannot be taken away in this place is a condition?"

I organized the quest conditions pointed out by Myu.

『Deciphering』 the 『Object』 in the 『Basement』. If the location, target and action conditions are fulfilled it starts up, that's convincing.

There's only a few players who would have 【Linguistics】 to decipher it and even less would come to this place directly.

Honestly, there was a blind spot in the conditions, I've had tons of questions about it.

What does this R Quest's R mean? Anyway, let's confirm the quest details from the menu for now.

—— 【R Quest: Subjugate Wisteria Peach Tree's Giant Wolf 1／3 】 ——

Destroy the cornerstones. —— 0／7

Not understanding the meaning of the quest's content, I looked towards Taku and Myu for help, but they shook their heads in the same manner.

"I don't know. But let's take screenshots of the important things in here. They might get handy later."

"You're right. Let's try looking for other info and go out."

As suggested by Myu, I saved the tapestry map on a screenshot and explored the basement. I was unable to find anything else other than the tapestry map.

"Still, R Quest huh. Myu-chan, do you have any idea what this R character means?"

"Hmm. Maybe it's something like 'Rare's' R, or maybe 'Relation's' R?"

What Myu mentioned might have been possible. However, Taku shot one of them down.

"I don't really get it, but I think its not 'relation' meaning. In case of the related quests, there's already the C of the 'chain' written in front. I don't think it's rare either. Yun, does anything come to your mind?"

"There's no way I could know if two hardcore gamers don't. Before that, the quest's first challenge, a cornerstone..."

"Won't we figure it out after we go back up? I'll go ahead."

Leaving that behind, Myu escaped from the stinky basement.

Taku and I shrugged in the dim basement, feeling the same and not wanting to stay in the dim basement forever.

After we left the narrow oppressive deserted house, we were able to feel a pleasant breeze under the blue sky. I stretched my body feeling the openness and took a look around.

"The hint would be tapestry's mark, I guess."

The number of marks on the tapestry in the basement was 7 and matching the number of cornerstones, that would probably be it.

Also, cornerstones would be the stones that are put into the ground to control underground water flows and earthquakes, at times it was used to seal spirits.

If you think of it as of a spiritual symbol, then it was something that shouldn't be touched. Is what it meant. And destroying it...

"The 'cornerstone' sounds unpleasant. It seems like something that seals evil spirits..."

"Rather than that, the closest one from here would be there."

Myu proceeded forward alone. Isn't that a bit too forceful, I thought, but looking at her from behind I understood.

"Good grief, Myu can't suppress her curiosity."

"It can't be helped right. Just by knowing there's an unknown quest, she became both cautious and excited. Let's overlook this."

Myu's suppressed the desire to dash in all alone and impatience could be felt from how she was skipping towards the target. She's all fidgety, still a kid isn't she. I thought.

"Still, Subjugate the giant wolf, that'd be a boss battle... are we going to do it with the three of us?"

"Well, if it seems like we can't do it we can always run. If we don't escape and die we can always retake the quest again."

I think dying and getting a death penalty would be painful, but it wasn't like we would lose any levels.

The demerits of it would be losing half the money and decline of the stats over a period of time. Meanwhile we would have time to remake out strategy and spend some time to cool our heads.

"Look look, Taku-san, Onee-chan. Isn't that the first cornerstone?"

In the direction Myu pointed to, there was a rock we saw before when we were exploring the abandoned village. Other than that nondescript stone, there was no other object that could be the cornerstone.

"Now, let's start. Onee-chan, please."

"Me, huh. Well, what we have do won't change, so fine."

I pulled out a pickaxe from the inventory and swung it down. With a high-pitched, hard sound as a response, a small scratch appeared on the stone. Unlike it's appearance suggested, it seemed difficult to destroy.

"Hard! Won't my pickaxe break before we finish destroying them all?"

"If that happens I'll blow it away with magic."

"Then, I leave that to you. Ha!"

I swung two, three times, enlarging the scratch. And when the cornerstone was destroyed, a change has occurred.

"What?!"

"Yun, get back! Myu-chan."

"Yes!"

I moved to the back, Myu and Take moved in front and set up their swords. Ryui's and Zakuro's also entered battle readiness, their hair tails and mane were raised as they stared at the broken cornerstone.

A white smoke has flowed form inside and gradually formed a shape of a person. It was a semi-transparent adult woman that looked like she was from countryside. There was no vitality in her face, she just one-sidedly spoke.

『"I'm grateful to you for releasing me. But you should go back immediately. You'll still make it."』

After leaving those words behind, she disappeared, dissolving in the air like a ghost or apparition that moved on.

"What was that just now."

"Wasn't that a quest NPC? Probably there are similar ones in the other cornerstones."

Taku responded to my question. Indeed, it was convincing if it's an event character.

"Look, the number on quest is increasing so it's properly progressing."

Despite the words of warning the woman who disappeared said, there was interest in the quest and curiosity that told us that the next cornerstone will reveal why was the village ruined.

Even if we were being stopped, the next one would bring us closer to the truth. It was as if one read about a ghastly sight but wouldn't know the truth until they continued reading, a development of a mystery novel.

"...it's gotten interesting."

"Ohh, after coming this far you've finally gotten eager, Yun. Well then, let's learn the giant wolf's identity as today's quest."

"Agreed! Next would be there! Let's go!"

We continued to destroy the cornerstones one after another.

From the destroyed cornerstones appeared a small child, dauntless youth, a girl with freckles, one-eyed hunter, a fat peddler. After hearing each of them confer, we gradually approached the core of the story.

We listened to the words of the last one, a woman wearing a robe.

『"I am a fortune teller. Well, I no longer have the power to learn things. Well then, since you are going around breaking the cornerstones, it must mean you want to fight that giant wolf. Even though I left wooden strips to stop ye. Since it's come to this, it's now too late. So, about him. He's just a ghost wolf that was entrusted the tree by a goddess. Nonetheless, he lived as a ghost for long long years, ye better remember his strength is not ordinary. If you can, I want ye to help that wolf who's obsessed with his mission. That's the last request of this old woman."』

After all the cornerstones were destroyed and all the cast finished talking, I had a rough idea of the background story.

It was a tale of a small, somewhat dark village becoming a ruin.

After a bad harvest had befallen the village, it has offered sacrifices to the giant wolf that was the land's god. Some of the rebellious villagers broke the cornerstones and rebelled, trying to defeat the giant wolf. However, the plan had failed and the village was destroyed.

The living had become sacrifices and the dead had become undead in the Horia Cave.

It was the 【Giant Wolf and the Wisteria Peach Tree】that devoured foreign enemies, protecting people. And at the same time it was the【Giant Wolf and the Wisteria Peach Tree】 that was being given sacrifices by the village.

In the end, they could either run away from the village or settle for the current status of the village. The giant wolf only cared about its own mission. In an attempt to overcome this fate, they incurred the giant wolves' wrath and everything has perished.

"It's a somewhat sad story. I was surprised when the children and women appeared as ghosts."

"True. Even if it's a setting, it's quite sad. Still, the quest is ongoing. If we defeat the Giant Wolf at least their souls will be saved, so we can properly give them salvation."

"It's just as Myu-chan says, the quest proceeded to the next step."

In response to Taku's words who checked the quest in the menu, I also took a look at the quest that progressed.

—— 【R Quest: Subjugate Wisteria Peach Tree's Giant Wolf 2／3 】 ——

Defeat the monsters that appear by the Wisteria Peach Tree. —— 0／1

The quest was definitely progressing.

We arrived at the quest point which was the Wisteria Peach Tree.

After we climbed up the hill we saw a normal blue sky spread out and space spread out below, but after we took a step over an invisible border we saw a different space spread out.

"Wha?! This is..."

There was a purple sky and a Wisteria Peach Tree with beautiful purple flowers. And, by the tree there was a horde of mobs awaiting us.

Illuminated by the creepy black sun, they all set up on their respective prey.

"Uwaa... impossible. This many of them."

"Wheeew... hmm. That'd be above hundred I guess? Taku-san, you think we can take them on?"

"If each of us takes 30 of them on... we'll barely manage."

"Myu, Taku! It's no time for carefree act! We're escapin...g."

I turned around, and when I attempted to take a step away from the tree, another few dozens of undead have crawled out from the ground and surrounded us.

Completely surrounded, I realized we cannot escape.

"Oh come on, we'll lose this right. Sorry Ryui, Zakuro. ——《Dismissal》”

"Oh-hoh. Taking this many enemies at once is too hardcore. I'm thrilled."

"That's a number that'd makes even me want to run for my life, but well, let's got at them at full strength!"

I have already realized that we're going to lose and returned both Ryui and Zakuro to the summoning stones. Myu and Taku also seemed to have resolved themselves to receive a death penalty. However, we displayed the will to fight until the end.

"Yun. Give me attack. For Myu-chan, a speed enchant!."

"Roger. 《Enchant》 ——Attack, speed."

With my enchants as a starting point, the undead have assaulted us.

Forming a circle around us, they pointed their swords and spears in our direction as not to let us escape. Bodies of bone stomped on the ground with dirty leather boots they barely wore, forming a siege around us.

And jumping over the undead was someone entering the interior of the encirclement.

"——Skeleton Raider?"

In the direction Taku muttered towards, there were three skeletons riding semi-transparent wolves large enough to allow a human ride on them. Each of them had a weapon and were irregularly equipped skeleton cavalry. The cavalry wolves had a semi-transparent bodies and were clad in purple flames, they had skeletons sitting in ragged saddles on top of them.

When those three came out, the surrounding undead only poised their weapons and were stuck on spot.

"First move for the win! ——《Sunlight Arrow》!"

Myu shoot multiple arrows of light from her free hand, engulfing one of the Skeleton Raiders and turning part of the undead siege into ash.

With just a single hit she sent a Skeleton Raider and a number of undead into oblivion.

What remained were undead who wouldn't attack and two Skeleton Raiders.

If it's like that then we can fight... we held onto faint expectations, however.

"Hahaha, no way. They got replenished."

My mutter has been sucked in by the purple sky.

The undead moved to close the hole that opened in the encirclement and behind them new undead have appeared, crawling out from the ground.

The undead siege simply replenished itself and once again, a Skeleton Raider has jumped in above the wall of undead.

"This seems like an event battle. We can't get away, but we won't be attacked harshly enough to be annihilated. We need to defeat a number of them and there's probably a time limit. Yun, are you ready?!"

"Well, we have to go at it until we can see the end! Onee-chan, support please!"

Myu and Taku kicked off the ground the same time and closed on the Skeleton Raiders.

Back to back with each other, Myu and Taku covered each other's blind spots, fighting against three Skeleton Raiders at once with the two of them.

After having her speed increased by the enchant Myu played around with the Skeleton Raider, inhibiting its mobility by aiming at the wolf that was responsible for it.

Using that chance Taku used an art and steadily dealt damage to the skeleton's body.

Myu led it around its nose and Taku delivered damage to it.

When the target changed to Taku, he loosened the attacks and Myu rushed at it instead to get targeted again.

I couldn't afford to just watch as the two performed a delicate hate management during combat. I attacked lightly to avoid the target changing, put on enchants on the two and used the speed cursed on the skeletons.

In addition to that, I assumed a support role of recovering HP and MP that were decreased as the two were hit or used arts.

Time after time again the two defeated Skeleton Raiders that reappeared. Even if one was defeated, another one always jumped inside of the encirclement. Alone, they were quite weak, but with no end in sight or a break our nervousness grew and we were being slowly worn out.

"Yun, a new one came out!"

"Roger!"

Since they were late to cope with a Skeleton Raider jumping in from outside of the encirclement, its target didn't change to Myu and it came running towards me.

As expected of a raider-type mob. It approached at a considerably high speed, as it charged towards me with a strong momentum and a high reach of the spear it held in its arm, the sound of the air being cut has reached my ears.

Also, since it thrust down at me from a higher position, it was difficult to counter-attack with a kitchen knife that had a small reach and the longbow that had low maneuverability.

Still, even though it wasn't at level of Myu or Taku, I was capable of self-defense.

"《Cursed》 ——Defense."

Rolling on the ground, I avoided the thrust coming from above and applied cursed on the back of the Skeleton Raider that ran by.

The Skeleton Raider turned around by the edge of the encirclement by directing the wolf and without losing momentum assaulted me again.

"Onee-chan!"

"Yun!"

The two raised their voices, but there was no need to worry. I was already prepared to intercept it.

" ——《Clay Shield》!"

An earthen wall appeared between me and the Skeleton Raider.

Without reducing the momentum the Skeleton Raider grandly hit the earthen wall that suddenly appeared and the bones its body was made of have scattered grandly.

Having a cursed status applied on it, the Skeleton Raider received damage from its own charge.

The wolf stood up unsteadily and its raider barely had any bones left in its body to fight. That's when I dealt the finishing blow to it.

"——《Bow Technique ・Arrow Stitching》!"

I jumped out from the side of the earthen wall and pulled the bow's string to the limit. The art released at close distance penetrated the Skeleton Raider's upper body, broke up and scattered its bones.

The Skeleton Raider's upper body turned into light particles and the wolf spirit that was carrying the remaining lower body of the skeleton has escaped outside of the encirclement while sprinkling the particles of light all around.

Before we could check if the opponent was defeated or not, a new Skeleton Raider appeared from outside the encirclement and was halted by Myu and Taku.

I turned towards the two's back and re-applied the enchants.

"《Enchant》 ——Attack, speed!"

"Thanks! Myu-chan, hold down the right one!"

"Roger!"

We continued to fight, cooperating together the three of us without falling. However, we didn't think a fight there's no sight of end to could be this tiring.

"Enemy's levels are are fine but... just how long are we supposed to take them on for!"

"Calm down Myu-chan!"

"Ahh, can we die and go back already? I've no problems with it at all..."

"You too saying such things, Yun! C'mon, another one's coming!"

When Taku cut the Skeleton Raider, no new enemy has appeared. Instead, the two remaining have jumped over the encirclement and the skeletons surrounding us dispersed to the sides, opening a path to the tree.

"What? Did we finally progress?"

"Seems... like it."

We defeated a few dozens of Skeleton Raiders. I don't know the exact number, but there was quite a lot of them.

And, we proceeded to the final step——

—— 【R Quest: Subjugate Wisteria Peach Tree's Giant Wolf 3／3 】 ——

Defeat the Wisteria Peach Tree's Giant Wolf 【Garm Phantom】. Remaining—— 0／1.

The quest advanced to the last stage and at the same time, fog started to gush out from the base of the tree.

The gushing purple poison-like gas formed a spiral. The wolf that was formed by the semi-transparent gas was worthy being called a giant.

Its total length was about ten meters. It was about three times as tall as a human. Wolf's limbs had its sharpness despite being a spirit body, and its mouth was big enough to swallow a human all at once.

The boss was clearly on a level at which players were unable to deal with. I felt a deja vu as I looked up and saw how enormous he was.

『"So ye are ones who destroyed my cornerstones..."』

"...the boss spoke. So he has an AI."

Taku muttered with admiration. However, it was ignored and the story continued.

『"The cornerstones are key points adjusted to suck out life! It's because of ye destroying it those undead are overflowing! Ye fools! Or maybe, ye were tempted by the healing of this tree!"』

Oh, I remember. I've seen mob this big before. It's the same as the 【Great Eater of Mythical Beasts】 that appeared on the last day of the summer camp event. It was too reckless for one person, no, it was too reckless for just one party to take it on.

A raid-class boss. R meant Raid. A quest recommended to be finished by multiple parties.

『"Just ye three aren't sufficient to become sacrifices. It cannot be helped, kin of mine, call them back."』

Howls have resonated together with the giant wolf's 【Garm Phantom】 words, seven Skeleton Raiders have appeared from the ground and flew away somewhere.

『"I would be content with devouring ye here and feeding the three with ye. However, for a new sacrifice ye are too few. I'll think of it if ye endure this blow."』

The giant wolf swung its big front leg. We reacted to that action.

Taku stood in front as a vanguard and took a defensive posture. I applied double DEF and MIND enchant on him and Myu expanded a light element's defensive membrane.

『"——Ye resist huh. Then I'll show ye."』

A single swing. A shockwave was released by the front leg swung down from above, it gouged the ground, engulfed the undead and assaulted us.

We tried to resist by clinging to the ground, but our resistance was in vain and we were lifted up and unable to position ourselves we fell on our backs.

"K-khha..."

It was a flashy attack that had enough power to lift a player's body. However, the shock I felt with my five senses was weaker then the one I would receive in the reality, making me confused.

If this was the reality, I should have felt a pain similar to being ripped apart, but having pain cut off in the game caused my sensory nerves to go mad, making me imagine it caused an overflow.

Myu and Taku also fell to the ground, glaring up at the giant wolf.

『"Hmph. Ridiculous, to think ye could defeat me with just that much! If ye wish to destroy us, bring ten times this much forces with ye!"』

The voice resounded on the battlefield. As I thought, this quest is recommended for a large number of people.

Rather than there being six cornerstones for six players of a party, there was seven for seven parties. The giant wolf also said there wasn't enough sacrifices. In other words, it meant 'call more people' hasn't it.

Even so, the resounding voice was quite harsh. Heavy bass sound intermittently delivered an impact to my head.

『"Hmph. Seems like they made it in time."』

While we couldn't get up, the Skeleton Raiders that flew away earlier have come back.

In their hands, they held seven ghost of the sacrifices with chains wound around them.

Both young and old, they were screaming with both their hands and legs immobilized.

『"So we weren't saved after all."』 『"No! I can't bear it no longer!"』 『"And here I thought I could finally meet my dead wife!"』 『"Back under the dark soil... I wonder when the next time will come."』 『"O' Goddess, is this also a trial?"』 『"I had nothing to do with the village in the first place! Release me!"』 『"So it failed huh. Well, think of yourselves as lucky for not becoming human sacrifices like us, forget this."』

The sacrifices that have become ghosts were dragged back to the ground along with the Skeleton Raiders.

What we saw in the end, were the ghosts making philosophical expressions or ones that suggested they gave up, crying children begging for help and heard screams that continued seemingly forever.

『"We will be going back to sleep. There will be no next time."』

Turning back into mist, Garm Phantom disappeared. Chasing after it, the undead sank into the ground. What was left behind, were just us, rolling on the ground.

Looking up at the Wisteria Peach Tree from below, having time to watch it with leisure I thought it was beautiful and out of place.

That's what they call escaping from reality, isn't it.

"Yun, Myu-chan. Are you okay?"

"I'm alive somehow. I was furthest back so I received little damage."

"I've had it close. Damn, my armor's durability..."

Right after such a tense scene, we've had a silly conversation. However, Myu alone stood up quietly without saying a word.

"Sorry. I'm feeling kind of bad, can I drop out?'

"Y-yeah, sure. Take it easy."

"Myu, are you okay?"

"Yup. I'll drink some water and calm down. Sorry."

Myu made a delicate smile and logged out. It was just a game, but she was deprived of her usual energetic behavior and motivation.

This event must have been too shocking, normally filled with pride and confidence Myu probably had it all shattered with one blow...

"Got it. Since it's not enough with just us, I'll talk with some acquaintances."

"Sure, I leave that to you, Taku. I'll go take a look how's Myu."

I got worried about Myu who logged out and kind of lightly ignored what Taku said.

"Myu-chan's isn't feeling the best. It can't be helped. Hurry up and go."

"Thanks, Taku."

"What are you saying. Both Myu-chan and you are important companions of mine. It's a given."

I thanked Taku in my mind. Accepting his encouragement, I also logged out.

After logging out, I went to Miu's room to check up on her and knocked on the door.

"Miu? How are you feeling? Can I enter?"

I've heard a sound come from inside, after a while, "you can enter" I heard Miu's voice say so.

"Coming in. Are you okay?"

"Ehehe, I lost."

She made a broad smile like back when I pat her, but this time it felt devoid of energy and motivation. It felt like she was just acting strong.

I asked Miu not minding that at all.

"Was losing that much of a shock to you?"

"Hmm. I... guess so? I mean, I never lost before."

As iff〜. She made a joke, but her expression was clouded over soon enough.

"As I thought, losing in a game is normal, isn't it. Winning and losing, losing and winning. Repeating that is fun, but I might have forgotten how is it to lose."

"I hardly ever win, it's all failures. It's not something to be bothered by so much, right?"

"That's because Onii-chan knows how it is to lose. But, you see. That's why I didn't think losing in VR would be that shocking. It was my first experience..."

Miu paused in middle of the sentence. I waited for her to continue.

"...also, that quest. The last ghost quest NPC stared at me before it disappeared. It's eyes were incredibly hateful, it was scary. I've never been looked at like that."

"How unexpected, to think you think such things as well."

"Hey, that makes me mad! But, isn't that quest's objective?"

Quest's objective, I didn't understand what she meant, but there seemed to be a meaning of it for Miu.

She looked up at the room's ceiling, let out a breath grandly and answered to that.

"Games are fun right. They're exciting, thrilling and addictive making you want to play. They makes me wanna go at them hard, have fun and make an uproar. That kind of festival-like fun times seem to go on forever, right."

"Well, I think it would be nice if fun times continued forever."

"But, playing games has to end one day. The world of dreams won't be there forever. Sometimes I decrease the time I play to remind myself of the real, aren't times like this that leave a bad after-taste good for to reconsider things?"

"...an opportunity to reconsider, huh. Maybe so."

When I was passing through the Horia Cave I hated it from the bottom of my heart. Since the games were providing fun, being pulled back to reality at times was very uncomfortable. No one could tell what kind of traumas people had, what they were

uncomfortable with or what would stimulate them. However, among the people with diverse personalities there will be those pulled by to reality by such things.

In order to change that unpleasant mood of theirs, they would look away from the game and would be reminded of the society existing in the real. I wonder if that was the intention behind such things.

"So, Miu, you're going to readjust yourself on the inside?"

"Yup. I might not break through it immediately, but it's okay. The greatest paladin Myu will come back without a doubt. Um... wait for it, kai?"

I extended my hand to wards Miu who acted shyly, as I pat her head she responded with a slightly embarrassed smile.

And——Miu's stomach sounded grandly. Honestly, her stomach reminded of its existence loud enough for me to hear it. Miu tried to make excuses in a hurry.

"N-no that's not it! It's not that!"

"Yes yes. Good grief, is there anything you want to eat?"

"Uuu... then, something gently-tasting."

I looked as Miu grasped the sheets of her bed and was dyed red with shame up to her ears.

"Then, I'll make rice gruel with crab and eggs. There should be a crab for a hot pot, so I'll borrow a leg or two from that."

"...thank you."

When I was leaving Miu's room, a quiet mutter made me return a smile before I shut her room's door.

It seems like there was nothing to worry about, but it will take time.

Chapter 6 - The Greed Sensor and Flame Prison Corps

"And so, I'm worried about Myu after all..."

『"Yun-kun, your excessive doting is showing."』

When I shared my worries with Emily-san through the friend chat, she responded appalled.

『"But I get it. R Quest discovery and 【Resurrection Medicine】 right. As for the resurrection medicine, you're still in the middle of creating it right?"』

"Yeah, Taku is gathering the Wisteria Peach Petals now, the last material I need is 【Water of Life】."

『"Mmm. I don't know. But how about asking other people?"』

"You're right. I'll do that."

『"Do your job properly and then tell Raina and Al about it in fun and interesting manner please. Until then I'll look after them."』

Although I felt like I was being spoiled by Emily-san who had a caring personality, I allowed myself to rely on her this time.

"Thank you for agreeing for the consultation today."

In the end we said our farewells and the friend call was disconnected.

"Now then, let's try asking crafters, Magi-san and the others."

It would be nice if they knew, thinking like that I initiated a friend chat, contacting Magi-san.

The chat connected with Magi-san immediately.

『"Yes, Yun-kun. What is it?"』

"There's something I want to ask. Is now okay?"

『"Yup. It's all right. What is it about?"』

"Actually, I'm in the middle of looking for an item for crafting a certain item. I wanted to ask Cloude and Lyly as well..."

After I said up to there, Magi-san responded with "wait a moment" and it seemed like she was talking with someone.

『"Sorry, Yun-kun. I'll switch to multi chat mode now. It'll be easier if you ask Cloude and Lyly at the same time, right."』

"Thank you very much."

The friend chat menu changed to the multi chat mode, and it turned into a state where I could hear multiple voices.

Of course, Cloude and Lyly were in the chat, but I felt like I heard other voices there too... or rather, I've heard those quite recently.

『"Then, as for the shark's rare drop, please."』

『"Haa, fine. We're really busy. If we get it, we'll do an exchange."』

That voice, it was probably Mikadzuchi. The one who sighed was Cloude. What were the two talking about?

『"It seems like Yun-kun has something she wants to ask, is it okay?"』

The conversation on the other side of the call stopped and I was prompted by Magi-san.

"Umm, I'm looking for a crafting material 【Water of Life】, do you know of it maybe? Cloude, Lyly."

『"【Water of Life】? Never heard of it."』

『"Me neither. By the way, Yuncchi, what are you trying to make?"』

"That's... I've been asked for 【Resurrecting Medicine】."

『"Oh, a 【Resurrecting Medicine】 in this time of need. Recently there was talk about Resurrecting Medicine being completed, were you inspired by that?"』

Magi-san acted a little bit surprised and it felt like there was something behind it as well, but continued.

"No, I've been asked for it by Taku. He's gathering the 【Wisteria Peach Petals】 while I'm looking for the other materials."

When I responded to Magi-san's question, I've heard a convinced murmurs.

『"I see. But I don't know either. I don't know what kind of crafting material is it, but if it's water then I could use it as a metal coolant."』

『"In my case I could use it in a stage of weaving threads."』

『"I could use it when I'm dissolving the paint and varnish on the staffs."』

Magi-san and other crafters have each imagined a situation in which they could use it with ease. I myself, secretly expected for the potions effect to rise if I were to use it instead of distilled water.

『"Yo, Missy. If you can't find it, how about you come here and make some side dishes to come with booze?"』

"I said, who the hell is 'missy'! I'm..."

I'm a man, I wanted to complain as usual but before I could, a voice I haven't heard earlier interrupted me.

『"Um, Yun-chan? I think, I know where it is."』

"Hey, that voice, Sei-nee?! Why?!"

Why, did she know and why, was she there. Although it meant those two things, it seems like Sei-nee took it as the former.

『"I've heard about the raid quest from Taku-kun. He invited a number of parties and friends to participate, did he spread that info?"』

After Sei-nee said that, I was reminded of the conversation I had with Taku.

"Ah, speaking of which he said so earlier."

『"That's right. As thanks for the info I'll tell you where to find it for free. You can get it in——"』

Sei-nee's voice was interrupted halfway and I could hear something like a slapstick sound come from the other side.

"Sei-nee?"

I called out worried, but for some reason the one who answered was Mikadzuchi.

『"Won't you make a party with us and go on adventure in a dungeon, Missy?"』

"A dungeon?"

『"The ones who discovered the raid quest is you Missy and Taku after all. We'll take you up to the location you can get the 【Water of Life】 you want in."』

That would be great. Despite thinking that, I still was bothered about Mikadzuchi calling me 'missy'.

"Please stop with calling me 'missy' So, about Sei-nee――"

『"Won't you make a party with us and go on adventure in a dungeon, Missy?"』

『"I'm okay! Yun-chan, it's fine I'm all right!"』

Why was she panicking, what was she upset about, I thought there was some trouble on the other side, but since Magi-san and Cloude as well as Lyly didn't make any noises, I could only tilt my head in wonder.

Whatever. I thought and directed my thinking towards the dungeon.

If I go with Sei-nee and Mikadzuchi to a dungeon, I'll be able to learn the location of 【Water of Life】 collection point.

And, by fighting in a party I could do some leveling. However――

"So, what's Mikadzuchi's real goal?"

『"In the underground dungeon of the Maze Town, there's a reinforcing material that has an additional effect we want. Missy, will you join the party in order to go and get it?"』

"I said, don't call me 'missy."

Probably, on the other side of the friend chat Mikadzuchi was going "kukuku" trying to suppress her laughter, I could easily imagine that.

"Well, if it's that then I'm fine with it. But I won't be too useful in there."

『"It's all right. I've heard from Sei. That you have something she doesn't."』

I wonder if that's the case. Sei-nee is strong and beautiful. Also, she holds the position of 【Eight Million Gods】 sub-master. Compared to me, she was a top player.

Saying that I have something Sei-nee doesn't, sounds like a method often used to console someone so I didn't take it seriously.

"Well, fine. So when do we gather?"

『"Let's see. With everyone's schedule... how about this evening?"』

"Understood. Now then, I'll prepare before then."

I disconnected from the multi-chat with Magi-san and the others and proceeded with preparations for completing the dungeon. Speaking of which, I didn't hear anything about the dungeon other than that it was the underground cave dungeon so I prepared the general purpose items.

I made a large number of High Potions and MP Potions. Also, Enchant Stones and Magic Gems. For as long as I could I polished the gemstones collected by Emily-san and others, then continued to use 《Skill Enchant》 on them.

In addition to that, I used 【Synthesis】 consuming my MP to combine items, I combined Iron Arrows and various bad status drugs making poison arrows. Since with this my stock of bad status drugs has been thinned, I'll have to return to cultivation of the poisonous herbs in the field I thought and made a small sigh.

Working all alone in silence I forgot about lots of things as I immersed myself, when I suddenly remembered I got worried about Myu again.

"Not good, these kind of feelings. All right, let's do this!"

I slapped my cheeks once, firing myself up.

Since it was the good time, I transitioned from the 【Atelier】's mini portal to the portal in the Maze Town.

The meeting was in the street in front of the dungeon's entrance, there were quite a few above average leveled players there.

"Oh, Missy! Here, this way!"

"It's embarrassing so stop with that 'missy'!"

Mikadzuchi found my figure and started waving to me, but I was in the middle of disappearing so I didn't want to attract too many gazes towards myself. I had a hood lowered deeply on my head and was facing down, so the players went "who?", looking at me puzzled.

"Mikadzuchi. You're troubling Yun-chan so quit it. Now then, let's form a party."

I accepted the party invitation that came from Mikadzuchi, entering it.

The party members were Mikadzuchi and Sei-nee as the two from 【Eight Million Gods】, Magi-san, Lyly and Cloude the three crafters.

Seeing this unusual combination I was puzzled but refrained from asking until we entered this unpopular dungeon.

After we were guided by Sei-nee to a stone gate, the scenery has completely changed.

It was very quiet and a murmur of water could be heard in the distance. It was a cave-type dungeon, but the ceiling and the passages weren't that narrow. Rather, the ceiling was high and the passages were wide.

The pale white light on the walls didn't have cold sharpness, it felt soft and dazed.

"Haa, since Yun-kun's been hiding recently Onee-san was very lonely."

"Uh, umm... I'm sorry, Magi-san."

As I stood there impressed by the sight of the cave, Magi-san called out to me with a smile. Since I was dazed my reaction was delayed and I reflexively apologized.

"Oh Yun-kun, you don't have to worry so much!"

"Uwahh?! Magi-san?!"

"Yuncchi, I'll cling too!"

"Hey, Lyly!"

While I was making a puzzled expression, Magi-san has embraced me from the front. When I hurriedly raised my voice, Lyly also joined in and clung to my waist.

"Wai-, it's embarrassing! Sei-nee and others are watching!"

"But...! Without Yun-kun to heal me I'm starting to have trouble breathing because I stay with Cloude!"

Being a guild master of crafting guild is not fuuun! Magi-san's cries echoed throughout the cave. Not knowing what to say to comfort her I lightly pat her back.

Then, Lyly, probably satisfied earlier than Magi-san moved away from me.

"Sorry, Yun-kun."

"No, it's fine, really..."

I'll keep to myself the fact that she pressed her breasts against me from the front.

And when I looked around, I saw smiling Sei-nee with a hand on her cheek say "oh my' and Mikadzuchi who grinned broadly. The last one, spreading his arms saying "now, I'm next" was Cloude. I suppressed the urge to smash his face in, ignoring him.

"S-speaking of which, why are Magi-san and others here?"

"We undertook a consultation on the topic of raid quest completion also, we came to collect items for the event Lyly's planning."

I recalled the event he was supposed to use the 【Insect Repelling Incense】 for and went "ahh", convinced.

"The raid boss is a spirit type so 【Silver Ore】 will be needed right? We can gather a little of it in here and at the same time get reinforcement material for Sei-san's weapon, there's lots of reasons."

When I was convinced by Magi-san's explanation, she said "of course, learning the 【Water of Life】's Yun-kun wants is also an objective" and winked.

"Since we're going until we reach boss, until what layer are we going to go?"

"Until we pass through all five layer of the dungeon."

Sei-nee seemed to have been most familiar with this dungeon and has taken over the explaining role from Magi-san.

The boss mob was in the deepest part of the dungeon, fifth layer, there was no shortcut that would lead to the bottom.

However, the mobs on the first and second layers are not active so we can ignore them and proceed, the fifth layer is just a rest area and the boss room so only the third and fourth layers were real problems.

"But we've searched this dungeon thoroughly so don't worry."

"You've searched it thoroughly yet you still need the reinforcement material from the boss, do you need a new staff again?"

When I responded to Sei-nee who puffed her chest and raised the bottom of her robe, her smile somewhat stiffened.

"What is it? Sei-nee."

"It's nothing."

When I tilted my head, puzzled with Sei-nee's strange appearance, Mikadzuchi furrowed her eyebrows and made a small grimace.

"Sei has her own circumstances."

"Haa..."

Is that so. Nothing came to my mind. "I'll guide you then", Sei-nee and Mikadzuchi stood in front.

"There's no need to hurry, let's proceed leisurely. Speaking of dungeons, it's treasures. Random treasure chests filled with hopes and dreams occasionally appear at random."

" "Hee～" "

Lyly and I let out our voices impressed with Sei-nee's explanation.

"On the first layer, you move in a straight line towards the stairs that lead lower but no treasure chest appears on the way there, but it does appear on the side alleys. That's why you should look around to the sides and search for the treasure chests."

"Yuncchi! There it is!"

"That side alley. It's in a place where light doesn't reach."

"But, about 90% of the drops from the treasure chests is poor equipment. It's mostly stuff that's sold to NPCs and becomes seas of electrons. Earlier, I found just poor items like a 【Magic Power Hammer】."

While listening to Sei-nee's explanation, Lyly and I went to pick up the treasure chest in the alley.

"Yuncchi, let's open it together."

"Sure, then, one, two——"

" "——Three!" "

Partially forced to do it by Lyly, I thought I should act my age, but without minding too much I checked the items.

Air Reduction Ring 【Accessory】

DEF+4 Additional Effect : Substitute (Wind)

"Yuncchi, what did you get? I got an item called 【Power Knife】."

"I got 【Air Reduction Ring 】. What's this 【Substitute】 additional effect? Is it like 【Gem Substitute Ring】? Hey, Sei-nee..."

In the treasure chest, there was the accessory with 【Substitute】 additional effect, a little bit of gold, silver and iron ore crafting materials and basic potions with default recovery value.

I wanted to ask Sei-nee to evaluate it, but she crouched on spot and was holding her knees.

"Umm..."

"What Missy pulled out is a very rare item with 5% drop probability. It's an item that reduces elemental damage taken by the player in exchange for the item's durability. If the item's durability runs out it's destroyed, but since its effect overlaps with many other effects that have limitations, you're in the luck. As for Lyly, that's a 'miss' equipment."

"Is that so. Great for you, Yuncchi."

In response to Mikadzuchi's description, I thought 'hee, is that so' and realized it had a backwards compatibility with 【Gem Substitute Ring】. As long as the 【Gem Substitute Ring】's gem was changed, it could exert its effect multiple times and the ring itself wasn't an unique item by itself. However, since it had quite a peaky nature, there were advantages and disadvantages to using it.

"I don't need it, so if you want Lyly you can take it?"

"Eh? Is that okay?"

"I don't mind. I already have the 【Gem Substitute Ring】. In exchange, how about you give me that ore?"

"That wouldn't be enough alone, next time I'll perform a maintenance on your equipment for free."

"Okay then."

I agreed to trade with Lyly and passed the 【Air Reduction Ring】 to him.

In fact, since I needed Silver Ore so that I could fight against the Garm Phantom, I was happy about getting it.

"Hey, Sei."

"That's right. Yun-chan is always like that."

"Ahh, how dreadful. Obliviousness."

Sei-nee and Mikadzuchi were talking about something and it seemed to be about me.

"Hey, what about me?"

"No, it's nothing. Let's proceed forward."

As we were prompted by Sei-nee, I once again today tilted my head puzzled. I thought that she acted kind of strange.

We went down to the second floor, engaged in some light combat to coordinate ourselves and level up, we aimed for the bottom layer.

•

"Kurocchi, there's one there too. A 【Black Lustrous Sphere】."

"I know. I'll collect this one here first."

Cloude and Lyly entered a small room in the middle of the third layer and were picking up black cobblestone that was lying in the corner of the room.

It seemed like they would be used for Lyly's event. While staring at the excited duo young beasts and I were taking a break.

"It's like an aquarium with fish flying isn't it."

I muttered after recalling the sight I saw on the second layer.

Fish-type mobs freely swimming in the wide space. The thinly stretched over the ground water matched well with the light source and created a reflection of water on the walls and ceiling.

When one looked up to the ceiling, they could see movements of fish that can normally be only seen from inside of water, observe an angle impossible to observe from normally.

That impression lodged itself inside of me earlier.

Flying fish aquarium. Of course, if attacked, they would assault us, but I was secretly satisfied being able to enjoy the aquarium part of the dungeon.

And, we were able to take a break on the third layer because Sei-nee and Mikadzuchi took initiative hunting down the enemies.

In a room with two entrances the two were in charge of taking care of mobs that came from one of them each.

"——《Aqua Bullet》"

Sei-nee raised her staff, created dozens of water bullets, and with a barrage of the water bullets she crushed an entire group of mobs that were looming towards her. Other than that, fishes were momentarily frozen with -30°c from a long distance and then one-sidedly slaughtered.

"——《Multistage Attack》"

Mikadzuchi raised her stick and released fast and sharp, barely visible thrusts. In an instant a sound of multiple enemies' bodies getting hit has rang out.

"Hmm. Enchant's strengthening is nice. Usually they take down about 80%, but with Yun-chan's support it's one shot."

"I took them down in a single blow in the first place, but the SPEED enchant is not bad."

"No, I think you're fine even without enchants."

I put intelligence enchant on Sei-nee and a speed enchant on Mikadzuchi who ensured a safe zone, but the combat in the meanwhile could be summarized in one word, 'spectacular'.

In the first place, the reason mobs were left with 20% HP, is because this dungeon's mobs appeared to have a small water resistance. For Sei-nee to take down those mobs with a single blow, her magic attack power was extremely high.

"Seicchi, Mikadzucchi. Let's go forward after we finish collecting!"

"Okay then, to the fourth layer. There's no pretty mobs like ones so far in there, but if we're lucky, he will appear."

"If we're lucky?"

"That's Mikadzuchi's objective. There's the 【Water of Life】 collection point and 【Silver Ore】 mining points on the fourth layer, but the enemies are significantly stronger there."

Guided by Sei-nee, we headed towards the stairs leading to the lower layer.

Meanwhile, I tried asking Lyly and Cloude about the 【Black Lustrous Sphere】 item they were gathering, but was responded with "secret" in a cute manner by Lyly making me give up on trying to forcibly elicit it from him as it would be boorish. I'll just look forward to the day of the event.

And, the first mob we met after going down to the fourth layer has blown away all the mood and impressions of the aquarium's flying mobs.

"A fishman, Sahagin. It's very realistic making it harsh."

"Yup, that's true. Still, Sei-san is really ruthless isn't she."

Magi-san agreed to what I muttered.

Sahagin are fish that had the chest fin and the dorsal fin evolve, turning into hands and legs. In their hand, there were three-pronged spears and knives they were armed with. They had ragged cloth wrapped around their waist.

It's protruding eyes caught the sight of us and it drew near, but——

—— 《Steam Pillar》

As the the Sahagin appeared looking like it came out of a monster movie, Sei-nee created an extremely high pressure and high temperature of over 100°c steam to stew it. Although it was steam cooking that didn't use any fire, the fish-man's hazy death throes could be heard.

Since it couldn't be instantly defeated with the enchant support like the mobs so far, I created a 《Clay Shield》 to prevent it from escaping. Its exterior was completely roasted.

All the mobs defeated in the dungeon so far looked like big fish and shellfish, so without any reluctance I was rejoiced being able to use it as a food treasury.

But, imagining ingredient drops from the Sahagin, I lost my appetite. I mean, that appearance...

"It's okay, Yun-chan. Sahagin's drops are mainly metal weapons and armor parts."

"I see. That's great then. Hey, Sei-nee. Did I say anything?"

"Just how many years you think I'm Yun-chan's older sister? I can tell just by looking at your face."

When Sei-nee said so with a smile, I wondered if it shows in my expressions so easily and sighed. However, I got taken aback after hearing what Mikadzuchi said next.

"That's for Sahagins though. However, it's different for a certain rare Sahagin-type mob."

"N-no way, it drops ingredients?!"

"Oh, Mikadzuchi. That thing doesn't appear so often."

Although Sei-nee tried to protest Mikadzuchi's words, starting with Lyly, Magi, Cloude and I listened intently. None of us had 【Cooking】 Sense as our main, but we've gotten curious hearing her say it so pompously.

"Sahagin's rare mob——Sabagin's strength is twice that of a normal Sahagin——"

Mikadzuchi paused for a moment. If it had twice the strength of a normal Sahagin, I felt it must've been quite strong. One versus one against a Sahagin I would use lots of items and win easily, but against a twice as strong Sahagin I would barely make it.

"——And, a three times as tasty ingredient! The drop is
【Sahagin-Approved Mackerel Can】."

"Processed goods?!"

"That mackerel can is delicious. It's amazing when eaten with booze and rice."

No, I couldn't care less about that. I thought.

"Ahh, speaking of which I've heard of it. If you eat something canned your HP's and MP's upper limit will be temporarily increased, or something."

Magi-san mentioned something she recalled and Sei-nee affirmed it.

"Taste aside, having food that increases stats is a really appealing."

There weren't any ingredients found that would increase both HP and MP limit so that was quire rare.

"But, even if we find the Sabagin, there's only 50% chances for a drop. And the extra rare drops from it would be silver equipment and the can."

"I told you, it doesn't appear so often."

Sei-nee admonished Mikadzuchi again. We still haven't finished our goal on the fourth layer so we couldn't go look for the Sabagin.

"In that case, how about we split in two? If I'm not wrong, Magi-chan is looking for 【Silver Ore】 and I have to show Yun-chan the 【Water of Life】 collection point right."

"Then I'll take missy Magi to explore this layer. I'll take one more with me."

"I'll go then, I'm a mage after all. It's more balanced with two vanguards and a rearguard, right."

Cloude volunteered for that, the remaining ones going to collect the 【Water of Life】 was me, Lyly, and Sei-nee who assumed the leading role. However, considering that both Lyly and I were closer to scouts rather than vanguards, I don't think one could call it too balanced but with Sei-nee there it should be good enough.

"Sei! If you find the Sabagin make sure to take it down!"

Mikadzuchi reminded us in the end right before we split into two.

In case we fight in separate locations, players who aren't near won't get any drops. Well, we have to find it first.

"We're going as well then."

After seeing Mikadzuchi off, guided by Sei-nee we proceeded deeper.

We have encountered several Sahagins, but Sei-nee defeated them all with pre-emptive attacks, when their number was reduced to only a few, Lyly and I used them for combat training. Until they approached I slowly damaged them with the bow, when they got close I switched to the kitchen knife and together with Lyly we played around with them.

I used 《Ingredients Knowledge》 and aimed at the vital points with the normal attacks, Lyly took care of the hate management, attracted and avoided the enemy's attacks before dealing damage with the arts.

Since the knife and the dagger were the same type of weapon, we both used hit and run tactics. However, we still got hit by attacks from time to time, at that time Sei-nee immediately used recovery magic to restore our HP to full.

And when we advanced towards the dungeon's end repeatedly battling like that, there was a small crack in the wall from which water has been trickling down.

"Is this it? Sei-nee."

"Yup. 【Water of Life】's collection point."

"Yuncchi, let's scoop some fast. We need to collect enough for Magicchi and Kurocchi too."

"You're right."

Agreeing with what Lyly said, I took out large containers and poured 【Water of Life】 into it.

Water of Life 【Material】

Permeated with power of ley lines, water that grants vitality.

I checked the 【Water of Life】's simple description and filled the containers with it. Even after the 【Water of Life】 ran out from the small pool, I collected it directly from the crack.

"Sei-nee, I'll should be able to make resurrection medicine with this. Thanks."

"It's fine to be grateful, but I'm having expectations of Yun-chan for the boss fight here."

"I don't know what you're expecting, but I'll do what I can."

While I answered Sei-nee, Lyly moved slightly ahead and peeked around the corner.

Since he made a stop sign with his hand, it seemed like enemy mobs were there.

"Yuncchi, please check the enemies."

"Understood."

Lyly checked the passage, but since he doesn't have either 【See-Through】 or 【Hawk Eyes】 Senses, I investigated the enemy instead.

On the passage we used before, there were three Sahagins on a patrol. Among them, here was one smart individual mixed in.

Its back was darkish blue, its belly shone beautifully as it was lit up by the cave's silver light source, emitting a beautiful marine blue glow. In addition to that, various places on his body were covered in silver, this Sahagin was clad in an armor.

For a mere fish, this Sahagin's model was much more refined than of those we met before. It didn't seem like the same Sahagin-type mob at all.

"A cool Sahagin is mixed in there."

"No way? ...to think we'd really encounter it."

"We did it. Let's not let it escape and defeat it."

In response to Lyly's voice, Sei-nee took a step back from surprise, grimaced and glared at the Sahagins.

"Well then, I'll defeat the normal Sahagins first. After that, Yun-chan and Lyly-kun will attack Sabagin and hold it up. As soon as preparation for my magic is complete, you retreat and I annihilate it, is that okay?"

We nodded to Sei-nee who had a serious expression, then waited for the timing during which the Sahagin patrol will be turned away.

And——

"——《Steam Pillar》!"

When the enemy started to notice us, Sei-nee strengthened by my enchant cast 《Steam Pillar》 which crawled on the ground approaching the Sahagins, then roasted them. All of the Sahagins were trapped for several tens of seconds and fell one after another in the steam pillar.

Only the Sabagin withstood Sei-nee's extreme firepower and slipping out of the steam pillar, it has come to assault us.

"Let's go Yuncchi!"

"I know! 《Cursed》 ——Defense, speed!"

Subjected to the cursed, Sabagin had its defense lowered, but it has resisted the speed cursed.

But, not minding it I released one arrow after another, dealing damage to it.

Between his fingers Lyly held a weapon other than his daggers, throwing knives which he was throwing at the Sabagin. Since we were both crafters who had a high DEX we didn't miss much as we unleashed a barrage of physical attacks at it, but the Sabagin skillfully blocked it using its trident.

Even with multiple arrows and knives flying at once densely since Lyly and I matched our timing, only one or two at best struck the enemy.

Still, the target changed from Sei-nee to us, as not to allow it get any closer I changed to the kitchen knife and together with Lyly we ran to the front.

"Kshaaaaa——"

"Lyly, don't get hit!"

"You too, Yuncchi!"

Since Sei-nee was currently preparing the magic, she couldn't provide support with recovery magic. That's why we had to avoid fatal wounds and attract the enemy to ourselves.

Alternating with Lyly I moved in front of the enemy and attacked it. Although our movements were much better than back when we first entered the dungeon, the Sabagin had twice the Sahagin's strength and closing on us it released sharp thrusts with its spear.

"?!!"

"Yuncchi!"

"I'm all right."

An attack with the spear that came from below as it was swung up has captured armpit and the shoulder. That blow has reduced my HP by 30%, then the spear was pulled back and Sabagin poised for a thrust. I avoided it by jumping strongly backwards, took out a High Potion and recovered.

If I received another attack now, it was possible that I'd receive 【Stunned】 bad status for losing more than half of my HP in a short period of time. It was quite close, causing cold sweat to trickle down my back.

"Preparations are complete. ——《Diamond Dust》!"

Signalled by Sei-nee, Lyly and I evacuated. Then, tiny particles of ice drifted in the air freezing Sabagin starting from the ends of its limbs. Sabagin tried to blow away the ice with its spear but the icy erosion did not stop. In the end, the Sabagin turned into an ice figure, cracked and shattered.

"Good work. How was it?"

"Tough. Sabagin's real strong. Also, that's not my normal battle style."

I muttered a complaint and sighed.

"Let's check Sabagin's drop then. If it's silver equipment, we'll be able to make ingots out of it and we'll have a material to create weapons against undead."

"Yuncchi, Yuncchi. If we're to find out what is it, let's do it after meeting up with Kurocchi and others. Let's announce it in front of others."

Lyly's proposal isn't that bad, as I thought that, Sei-nee called Mikadzuchi through friend chat to decide the meeting point and we started to move.

On the way to the collection point we moved slowly in order to level up some by battling, but on the way back to merge by the stairs leading below we moved fast. The reason it was much faster, was because Sei-nee annihilated the Sahagins with the first attack.

"Sei-nee. The fight with Sabagin, did you hold back?"

"Rather than holding back, in order for Yun-chan and Lyly-kun to get some battle experience I just delayed the spells's activation."

When Sei-nee said so with a troubled smile, both Lyly and I laughed, forgiving her.

It's something she did thinking of us. Even if she kept quiet about it, it wasn't something to be angry about.

"Ah! Yun-kun, Lyly! Also, Sei-san. Welcome back."

"Magicchi, Magicchi! On the way back we found Sabagin and defeated it!"

"Really?! And, the result?!"

Seeing Mikadzuchi all bothered about the drop Sei-nee made a bitter smile. Then, on Lyly's signal we checked the drop we haven't taken a look at yet.

"One, two——"

Lyly opened his inventory with a sparkle in his eyes, but after checking the item he slumped.

"Sorry, Mikadzucchi. It's 【Silver Shoulderpads】."

Ehehe, Lyly laughed without any energy in it.

"Well, the probability is 50%, there's no need to be bothered about it is there? Ah, Mackerel Can."

Honestly, since I could make stewed mackerel by myself I didn't need it. The moment I thought that, Sei-nee who was walking next to me crouched, her shoulders shaking strongly.

"Yun-chan, not fair〜. Why are you getting rare items one after another like that..."

"Umm... Sei-nee?"

I saw something I've seen less often since she moved to university far away, Sei-nee's depressed appearance. Mikadzuchi for some reason put a hand on her forehead and muttered.

"Really, why did Mikadzuchi have to call Yun-chan... it would be fine if we just told Yun-chan where 【Water of Life】 can be collected."

"But, just as we suspected, Missy has it."

As expected, seeing Sei-nee like this Mikadzuchi faltered. Sei-nee was a reliable beauty of an older sister, but at times she acts spoiled or gets depressed like this. That also is quite cute, but let's leave that aside for now——

"Mikadzuchi——is there any other objective you have other than the dungeon's boss?"

When I glared intently at Mikadzuchi, after faltering she panicked even further.

She tried to make some excuses, but when I ignored them and continued to stare at her she has given up on the idea and slumped.

"I get it so don't stare at me like that. Sei said it before, that Missy is lucky."

While happily, with a broad smile she polished the new staff which dropped from the boss mob, Sei-nee bragged boasted about me to Mikadzuchi. Sei-nee intended

to normally teach me the location, but Mikadzuchi acted assertively and has incorporated me into the party for the dungeon to rely on my luck.

"Aiming for the rare drop many times and battling is tough, right. Also, Sei catches it quite often."

"Catches what."

When I spoke to Mikadzuchi with irritation in my voice, I was responded with unfamiliar words.

"She's catching the greed sensor."

Greed sensor is an occultistic phenomenon that's supposedly making it harder to get an item the more one wanted it, it was true that there were deviations from the probability, and there was a lot of people who caught it.

"So Sei-nee catches it quite often? Is she unlucky?"

"Her luck isn't bad. However, the items Sei herself wants don't want to drop. This time's boss drop, the reinforcement material is for Sei sake, this time surely..."

"And so you involved me?"

"To be precise I involved Cloude and others as well to increase chance of getting it."

Rather than get two items after defeating it with two people, defeating it with six and getting six items was better and the possibility of the item dropping for one of the members was higher.

"Sei herself has rare items she has no use for she can trade for it, or so we calculated."

I listened to what Mikadzuchi had to say while consoling Sei-nee. Depressed Sei-nee was considerably calm, but I decided that going to challenge the boss like this would be cruel to her and made it so that we rested in the break room of the fifth layer.

"So, Missy. The 【Sahagin-Approved Mackerel Can】 give it to m—"

"There's no way I would give it away after hearing that. Geez..."

I ignored Mikadzuchi and thought of a way to cheer Sei-nee up. It should be fine to spoil and distract her. I can't care less about Mikadzuchi whose shoulders drooped dejectedly.

"Sorry Magi-san, Cloude, Lyly. Will you lend me a hand in consoling Sei-nee?"

"Sure, but what will you do?"

Magi-san tilted her head puzzled. She didn't have any intention of rejecting it, so I explained and convinced her. In the end, I called out to Cloude and consulted him if a certain something could be done.

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"Haa, I'm being healed～"

We were still in the fifth layer's break room right before the boss' room.

Inside of it, small animals not fitting in with the dungeon have surrounded Sei-nee.

Magi-san's partner, a young wolf Rickle. Cloude's partner, kitten Socks. Lyly's partner, the bird Neshias. And, my partners Ryui and Zakuro. Patting them and holding them gently against her chest, Sei-nee made a loose expression.

Small tears could be seen in the corners of Sei-nee's eyes, she must've felt like crying because of her greed sensor. I thought.

"Sei-nee. Calmed down?"

"Yup. Yun-chan, sorry."

"Well then, let's go to the boss."

Sei-nee put down Rickle and Socks she was holding to her chest on the ground and pat their heads.

Patted Rickle squinted comfortably and Socks who cried sweetly as it stared at Sei-nee reluctant to part with her. However, she shook it off, ignored Mikadzuchi who was still depressed and turned towards us.

"Well then, the vanguards will be Magi-san and Mikadzuchi. Yun-chan and Lyly in the centre. The rearguards will be me and Cloude-kun, no problems right?"

"No problems. Before we go to the boss put enchants on us."

I applied an enchant of the type of a chosen type on everyone. When it was Sei-nee's turn and I put magic attack power increase and mind enchant on her, Socks made a remarkably loud cry.

『"Myaaa――"』

"Mm? What was that?"

"Socks is just being friendly. Now, about time we returned them."

Cloude lifted up Socks who was coiling itself around his leg and returned it to the summon stone. Doing the same, was me, Magi-san and Lyly. Each of us returned our partners to summoning stones and proceeded deeper.

There was a long and narrow passage leading to the boss who was far in the back.

In case someone else was there before, we should wait in the resting place we were in earlier, but this time there was more than one party ahead of us.

"That's... a party that's fighting the boss and a party that watches them fight?"

The party that was fighting the boss mob, Twin-Headed Shark had it cornered, but they seemed to be worried about the party that was observing them. Also, the party that was observing had their weapons drawn and something like killing intent could be felt from them.

"——Mikadzuchi. Among them there's the guy who came to my store."

"I know. They're 【Fosch Hound】 PKs."

There was one of the PKs Mikadzuchi saved me from in the 【Atelier】. He noticed and headed towards us.

"You bunch?!!"

My body trembled as I recalled how I was grasped by the collar, but Sei-nee held my hand and I was able to calm down. Moreover, Magi-san and Mikadzuchi positioned themselves as to hide me.

"Tch, the female player who got in the way back then and 【Crafting Guild】's guild master huh."

He muttered as if spitting the words out, to which Magi-san cheerfully responded.

"Hello there～. How are we feeling?"

"Ha! Obviously, the worst! You guys've tightened too hard and we can't buy any weapons, armor or consumables! Don't screw with me!"

"Who is the one screwing around here. Not only you repeated your guild solicitation, you also acted maliciously towards a number of crafters. In response to the losses and disadvantages PK guilds and new guilds bring to us, crafters united and just stopped supplying you items."

Magi-san did something like that while I was in the hiding?! Surprised, I looked at Magi-san's reliable back.

"Tch, we're outta here."

Spitting curses, the leader took his comrade, the PK who tried to solicit me and escaped towards the open entrance.

"Well then, it seems like people over there finished fighting boss, let's greet them."

The party that was in combat with the boss earlier lowered their heads to us lightly and we chatted about a thing or two. They were grateful to us for driving off the PKs, since I didn't do anything in particular that made me feel uneasy.

"All right, let's challenge the boss again."

In response to Mikadzuchi's voice we turned towards the boss that reappeared and readied our weapons.

The boss was a shark-type mob with two heads. Our pre-emptive attack was Sei-nee's simultaneous sweep of dozens 《Aqua Bullets》.

Magi-san and Mikadzuchi moved in front of the boss and attacked.

The flying Twin-Headed Shark attacked with a tail slam and by biting with its sharp fangs. After avoiding those, Mikadzuchi thrust into the shark's nose that was its weak point, which resulted with the Twin-Headed Shark landing on the ground having its senses driven mad. That moment Lyly cut with the daggers he held in both hands. And Cloude released a darkness element magical attack.

"I'd better not lose to them."

While everyone attacked continuously to gaining chain attack gaining bonus damage every time they hit, I tried buying more time making the boss unable to move, even if only a little.

The arrows I chose were ones that were synthesized with 【Sleep】, 【Paralysis】 and 【Stun】 bad statuses.

After they pierced the shark's body, it received a bad status.

The movement of the shark that gradually recovered its senses from the impact had slowed down again.

When there remaining HP was cut down to 40%, Mikadzuchi started to move away from the front.

"I leave the rest to you!"

"Hey! Mikadzuchi!"

"Yun-chan, it's up to us!"

Sei-nee has rebuked me, and when I turned around I saw the PKs who have fled earlier plus one new one who were about to pounce at us.

"Geez, they waited until we start fighting the boss to attack us from behind, that's cheap."

I sighed and looked away from Mikadzuchi who faced five PKs and one more who was observing us, looking back at the boss again.

"Let's finish this! Match me!"

Along with Cloude's shout, we went on the last offensive at the Twin-Headed Shark that almost recovered from the bad status.

"Haa——《Sword Dance》!"

"——《Make Weak》!"

Using continuous attack art Lyly increased the amount of chain attacks and Cloude used a darkness elemental magic I didn't know of. As a result, a dark red aura surrounded the Twin-Headed Shark.

"He's become weak to fire element!"

"It's my turn then! ——《Flame Turn》!"

Magi-san used a weapon enhancement magic and flames have sprouted from the cracks of the dark red flickering axe.

I matched it and used a new enchant.

"《Element Enchant》 ——Weapon!"

The one I chose was a fire weapon enchant that consumed a fire elements stone. Even more intense flames sprouted from Magi-san's weapon, she was surprised for an instant before floating a smile of satisfaction as she brandished the large axe.

"It's over!"

The shark's right head was swallowed by the gushing flames, struggled and it drooped without strength. The left head tried to fight back, it opened its mouth and attacked Magi-san who was close by, but the head was pierced with ice spears from the left side.

The grandly opened mouth has been pressed down by numerous chunks of ice that made one mass and sewn together by a large number of ice spears. That turned out to be a decisive factor, the Twin-Headed Shark's body turned into light particles and disappeared.

Normally, I would be honestly happy with having this as the end, but I was worried about Mikadzuchi who headed to fight off the PKs. However, that also ended as baseless fears.

"What? You came back in high spirits and had tables turned on you?"

"Damnn! Flein! Take her down!"

The PK that tried soliciting me into his guild called to the new one who appeared, the man who hasn't participated in combat until now pulled out the sword from his hip and started to walk at a brisk pace.

Seeing the man called Flein participate, remaining PKs made dark smiles, but that has immediately changed into astonishment.

"Even if you bastards from 【Fosch Hound】 are also a PK guild and we cooperate with each other, it doesn't mean I have to clean up after you fuck up. It's unsightly, so why don't you become my experience?"

"Wha?!!"

Without any hesitation, he cut down a 【Fosch Hound】's PK from behind. The five PKs were hit by critical hits from behind and taken down in the blink of an eye.

"Oh, sorry. It seems like 【Fosch Hound】 guys troubled you. I'm Flein."

Flein called out to us as if he didn't just commit a slaughter, but Magi-san absent-mindedly muttered, saying what's his position.

"——The other PK guild's 【Flame Prison Corps】 guild master, Flein."

"Ohh? So you know about me! There's the 【Eight Million Gods】's master and sub-master. There's the 【Crafting Guild】's trio. And... well, I don't know you, but since the bunch is obsessed about you, there has to be something."

Seeing as the man didn't deny being guild master of a PK guild, my expression strongly cramped up.

Considering his abilities that allowed him to take down the five from earlier in the blink of an eye, I didn't want to fight him.

"If possible, I'd like you to overlook us."

"That'd be out of question."

Can't we negotiate? Is it items? Guild solicitation? Or maybe revenge?

"There's only thing I desire——intense enough to uplift me, thrilling slaughtering each other! So I want PVP which isn't a set in stone routine work. I want to fight with flesh-and-blood players! That's why I can't overlook you here!"

Of all things a combat maniac, it's over, we'll be taken down here - is what I thought, but I didn't really have any problems with just losing half of my money...

"But, I'm not conceited enough to think I can take down a party of six all alone. That's why I'll fight with the strongest one here and go back. How about it?"

"In that case I'll take you on. Missy and others can watch."

"Mikadzuchi..."

"Don't worry."

"Without you the party's vanguard's balance will break down, it'll be hard to go back. Don't lose."

Sei-nee... is she concerned? Or maybe it's her real feelings? In any case, Mikadzuchi accepted it and just smiled wryly.

"Well then, let's start."

"I'm ready."

Mikadzuchi readied her stick that was as tall as her. Flein set up a sword so thin it seemed like it'll break if used in combat.

Both of them closed the distance between each other in an instant and swung their weapons at each other. Mikadzuchi's thrust was deflected by the thin sword, Flein moved in all at once and cut her. She avoided it by hair's breath and did a horizontal swing that was avoided with a jump.

There were a few dozens exchanges, but Mikadzuchi was gradually being overpowered.

"Hoho, what's this! Is a huge guild's top only this much?!"

"Where did you get this strength. What a brute force!"

They yelled at each other and used all their strength.

Flein joyfully raised his voice and Mikadzuchi painfully took each hit.

They were both players, so I wondered where did such a difference come from. Both Flein's strength and speed exceeded that of Mikadzuchi. She compensated for it with her skills and her weapon's long reach. It seemed like someone's weapon would break if they continued to fight like this. And, that time has come.

"Haa——wha?!!"

"Over huh. What a shame, I'll at least use this thing to end it. ——《Killing Edge》!"

Mikadzuchi's stick was broken down and she lost her weapon. The fact that Flein's brittle-looking weapon was more durable than Mikadzuchi's was strange, but I've had an even worse feeling about the art he used.

A black effect crawled through the thin sword, extended and disappeared in thin air. In that state the sword's slash aimed for Mikadzuchi's neck——

"《Enchant》 ——Speed!"

"?!!"

Momentarily, a speed enchant was cast on Mikadzuchi and she succeeded in barely avoiding the attack in the last second.

The art, avoided by leaning backwards as if falling down, had the effect on the blade scatter in the air during the swing.

"...she avoided it, huh."

Flein who seemed to be having fun furrowed his eyebrows and glared towards me. He knew I did something just a moment ago. He understood that I intervened in the two's fight. I just acted instinctively.

"Kukuku... ahahahaha——avoided! She avoided a sure-kill!"

He placed a hand on his forehead, Flein's laughter echoed loudly in the location. Feeling it possible that his target would change to me for intervening in the two's fight, I was covered in cold sweat out of dread. Flein continued to laugh happily from the bottom of his heart.

"Is that so, I see. So that's why 【Fosch Hound】 is obsessed with her. This one's interesting! There are folks strong by themselves, but to strengthen others! Like this, fellows who couldn't do a thing against me might actually surpass me!"

Flein stared at me happily, but Mikadzuchi stood between us to intercept his line of sight.

"Our match isn't over yet."

"Ah? That's true. Ohh, well, after having that avoided, I can't use it any more. Let's do it again next time in perfect conditions. Okay then, I'll be going back."

After saying so, Flein walked towards the only door in the boss room. And, when he was leaving——

"The obsessed-about fellow over there... next time we meet, I'd like to go at it with ya."

I've caught attention of a troublesome guy. I screamed in my mind and unable to protest it I could only see him off.

Flein said a lot of meaningful things like about that attack not being perfect, and then our encounter has ended.

Epilogue - Enthusiasm and PVP

After defeating the boss and the encounter with PK Flein that was an overkill, nervousness quickly left everyone and we aimed to escape the dungeon.

Like that, using the shortest route we arrived on the surface in a short amount of time and immersed ourselves in the feeling of freedom.

"Haa, so tired～."

Lyly and I sat on spot, exhausted. Also, Magi-san smiled wryly seeming just as tired. Cloude was talking about something with Mikadzuchi and Sei-nee drew near me.

"I'm sorry. Somehow, it's turned really weird."

"It couldn't be helped. But, way too much stuff happened..."

In addition to that, we forgot to check the drops. Without thinking much about it I opened the menu to check what did I get and sighed.

"No way I could get rare drops continuously, right."

"Speaking of which, we defeated the Twin-Headed Shark. I forgot all about it with during that rich development. If Yun-chan didn't get it, it doesn't seem like I will."

Sei-nee sat down beside me and with little expectations she checked the boss' drop.

"..........!"

"Sei-nee, what is it?"

"...I did it, Yun-chan! It's boss' rare drop! The strengthening material I wanted is here!"

Saying so, Sei-nee threw her arms around my neck embracing me. I was embarrassed by the lines of sight around us, but since she was really happy I thought that pointing that out would be very crude.

"Oh right. Lyly-kun, can you reinforce this staff with it?"

I sighed seeing off Sei-nee who moved away unusually excited, Cloude approached taking her place.

"If not for you, this party wouldn't exist, in that meaning we could say that you're indirectly carrying luck."

"That kind of thing is boorish, Cloude."

"Hmph, I get it. Still, to think such a proposal would come."

He said so, smiled, then looked at Sei-nee who was heading towards Magi-san and Lyly to consult on the topic of her weapon's strengthening.

"What? I thought you two were plotting something, did you do something after all?"

"That's a secret."

I responded like that to Mikadzuchi who overheard us. It's not like I manipulated drops.

When we called the young beasts before the boss to console Sei-nee, Cloude had the Luck Cat Socks raise Sei-nee's luck. I don't know if it affected the drop rate, it's might be just a superstition, but I asked him to do so.

Even I don't know if it had any effect, Sei-nee acquired the boss drop so I was satisfied with the result.

"Well then, we're disbanding right. It's getting late so I'll be logging out."

After that, I'll continue my hiding and probably mix the resurrection medicine. When I thought so, Magi-san called out to me on behalf of the crafters.

"Yun-kun. Before the event comes we'll blow away and clean up all the problems with guild solicitation and such, so just wait."

"I understand. I'll look forward to it."

Then, this time Sei-nee called out, halting me.

"If you're logging out, then can you spare me some time? It won't be that troublesome."

"Sure? What is it?"

"Just a little talk."

Fufufu, Sei-nee laughed.

After parting with Mikadzuchi, Magi-san and the others, together with Sei-nee we came to the First Town's portal.

As we walked in brisk pace down the main street, Sei-nee started a conversation.

"Yun-chan, are you worried about Myu-chan?"

"Did you hear from Taku?"

"Yup. 'It seems like she's feeling down', he said. So, I thought 'then isn't Yun-chan worried in that case?'. But, Myu-chan is okay. She's a strong girl after all."

In that case, wouldn't it be better if she talked to Myu rather than to me? While I thought that, I was taken by Sei-nee through the west gate, outside the town's walls.

There, was the place PVP practice was frequently happening at night.

And in the centre of it, there was Myu.

In the middle of a battle royale in which numerous players were fighting all at once, she intently fought using both sword and magic.

"Need more! It's not enough! This is nowhere close to that boss! Next!"

"In that case, I'll be your opponent. Let's raise both of our levels and abilities!"

"Yes! If I can win against Taku-san in PVP, I'll win against the boss next time!"

Myu who was the last one standing in the battle royale system started another PVP battle without even taking a breath. Her opponent was Taku, they both laughed loudly which seemed like a starting signal and the two's weapons clashed, smiling.

As I continued to watch the spectacle that unfolded with their high level offense and defense, Sei-nee spoke to me.

"Yun-chan, are you still worried after seeing this?"

"It's my loss for worrying. Good grief, just my imaginary fears."

Just when I thought she was so depressed, she already was all positive about raising her levels and improving her skills in combat with other players. What a busy person my grand little sister is.

Then, after the two settled their fight they fell down and sprawled out on the night plains. That's when my eyes met Myu's after she fell down. She raised a loud voice and got up energetically.

"Yun-oneechan and Sei-oneechan?!"

"Y-you look energetic. Well then, It's about time I logged out and prepared for tomorrow..."

"Sei-oneechan, capture Yun-oneechan!"

"Let go! Sei-nee!"

Sei-nee standing next to me grabbed my arm to prevent me from escaping. I've got a bad feeling the moment I was found by Myu and tried to escape immediately but it didn't work.

Taku joined in and I was surrounded by three people.

"Yun-oneechan is also coming to fight that big pup! Don't run and become strong!"

"No, it's a wolf not a big pup, right. Heck, you should remove me from the member list and take someone stronger.”

I slowly moved backwards to retreat, but my back was pressed on by Sei-nee and my hand was grasped by Myu when I bent forward.

"Now then, let's do some light PVP training!"

"Let's see just how well can Yun fight. Actually, I don't know that too well. We'll have you show us your abilities."

"Speaking of which, Yun-chan. Didn't you use an 【Enchant】 skill we don't know just earlier? Tell us all about it while we do some PVP. "

I felt like I was lured into an outrageous place.

During PVP, Myu wiped off her sweat with satisfaction, Taku happily chased me all around and Sei-nee overwhelmed me with ease despite leaving her main staff with Lyly and using a sub-weapon. This time it was me who fell down on the plains and sprawled out.

It was hard for me to even move, but thanks to that all rather than my attack senses, the senses related to avoidance were intensely raised.

Being able to clearly realize I have become stronger, I thought it wasn't so bad.

"All right, let's do it again sometime!"

But, I didn't want to do it ever again. I logged out in such mood.

The crafters' event is nearing. Also, with preparations for the raid quest we found there was lots of things to do, sounds fun.

Afterword

To those whom I meet fist time, to those whom I'm meeting again, hello. It's Aloha Zachou.

Towards those who took this book in their hands, A-san in charge of editing, Yukisan-sama who prepared wonderful illustrations and towards those who have seen my work on the net before it was published I'm very grateful.

Also, Only Sense Online's comic version is being serialized in Age Premium. I'm deeply grateful to Hani Kuraun-sama who is in charge of drawing the comic version.

This time, I structured 4th and 5th volume as a set and the events will continue in 5th volume.

As a result of rebuilding the webnovel in form of a light novel, there were some scenes cut out, scenes revised and new scenes. Recently, I've been thinking 'it sure changed lots' with a distant look in my eyes.

For the volume 4 and 5, I've consulted the editor a lot as to how should I rearrange the plot and what kind of charm would be best, fretting a lot. It'll become some good memories. Thank you very much for agreeing on the consultation.

Just like last time, and the time before that I'll end the formal talk like this. This time I also prepared a story to share. Just like last time, it's a story about a game.

I watched a number of game live streams on niconico douga, stocking up on stories. Despite how I am, it's not like I'm using all of the stories I've collected from the live streams in my work.

I tried incorporating them into the novel, but it didn't work. One of them was a game called 'NecroDancer'. It's a rogue-like game where you have to match the rythm, this game makes players battle while matching the BGM's rhythm which is very refreshing.

In the novel, it would be difficult to express music and BGM, the rhythm wouldn't give all of the readers the same image even if line breaks were used. That's why, even if I'd like to put in a music element, it's imposisble isn't it. Thus I gave up in the middle of it.

The next time I felt 'impossible' was when I saw management simulation games. Specifically, I mean games like 'SimCity' and 'Banished'. In these games you freely develop and manage cities, so to speak, the player manipulated the world from a God's point of view.

The management simulation's lack of objective makes it slightly similar to online games, but since I would have to rework or start over again which makes it

difficult to incorporate it. Also, to add a large system of uncertainties like disasters to operate in the novel, I would have to significantly simplify it. In that sense, we could call the 【Atelier】 a simplified management and a system.

Like that I looked for various stories in the games, but the amount of live streams was a mere fraction of the ones out there and there's still a lot of interesting games out there. While at it, I'm having fun trying to develop a new game genre not seen before yet. I think it's a good way to enjoy myself.

From now onwards as well, please take care of me, Aloha Zachou.

In the end, let me once again thank you, readers who have taken this book in your hands.

I look forward to the day I'll be able to meet you all again.

Sense Status

» Cloude

Weapon	Lucif of Chaos
Head	—
Outerwear	CS No.1 Satanic Catastor
Underwear	CS No.1 Satanic Catastor
Arms	CS No.1 Satanic Catastor
Torso	CS No.1 Satanic Catastor
Waist	CS No.1 Satanic Catastor

Acquired Senses

【Sewing Lv17】【Leathering Lv10】【Long Staff Lv12】
【Robe Lv27】【Sorcery Lv5】【Darkness Element Talent Lv29】
【Magic Increase Lv9】【MP Increase Lv28】
【Crafting Knowledge Lv38】【Taming Lv6】

Unequipped

【Staff Lv30】【Magic Power Lv15】
【Magic Attack Increase Lv11】
【Magic Defence Increase Lv3】
【Chanting Reduction Lv7】
【Synthesis Lv7】【Linguistics Lv25】

【Sewing】 is【Spinning】's higher Sense. Allows crafting of better cloth and cloth armour.
【Leathering】 is【Pelting】's higher Sense. Allows crafting of better leather and leather armour.
【Darkness Element Talent】 allows using darkness element's magic.

» Lyly

Weapon	Twin Leaf Knives
Head	—
Outerwear	CS No.2 Protector of Nature
Underwear	CS No.2 Protector of Nature
Arms	—
Torso	CS No.2 Protector of Nature
Waist	CS No.2 Protector of Nature

Acquired Senses

【Carpentry Lv20】【Dagger Lv14】【Swiftness Lv2】
【Garment Lv21】【Magic Power Lv51】
【Physical Increase Lv2】【Crafting Knowledge Lv39】
【Pre-Emptive Knowledge Lv22】【Taming Lv6】
【Vital Point Knowledge Lv17】

Unequipped

【Axe Lv22】【Magic Talent Lv10】
【Physical Attack Increase Lv6】
【Physical Defence Increase Lv2】
【Trap Disarm Lv6】

【Carpentry】 is 【Woodworking】's higher Sense. Allows crafting of better wood and wooden products.
【Garment】 is a type of cloth armour. In contrast to robes, it has high physical defence correction.

Sense Status

» Emilio

Weapon	Uroboros' Joint Bellows
Head	Paracelsus' Clasp
Outerwear	Hermes' Replica Plate
Underwear	—
Arms	Alchemic Gloves
Torso	Hermes' Replica Plate
Waist	—
Accessories Equipment limit 1/10	Mask of Pain Receiving (1) Fake Tag (1), Distorted Voice

Acquired Senses

【Alchemic Arts Lv12】【Synthesis Lv48】
【Connecting Sword Lv20】【Long Sword Lv12】
【Physical Increase Lv16】【Sorcery Lv7】
【Magic Power Lv20】【Party Lv30】
【Clan Lv3】【Improved Commanding Lv24】

Unequipped

【Sword Lv30】【Whip Lv30】【Light Armour Lv19】
【Craftsmanship Lv25】【Physical Attack Increase Lv24】
【Collector's Eye Lv34】【Speed Increase Lv20】

【**Alchemic Arts**】is【Alchemy】's higher Sense. Allows conversion into even higher level items.

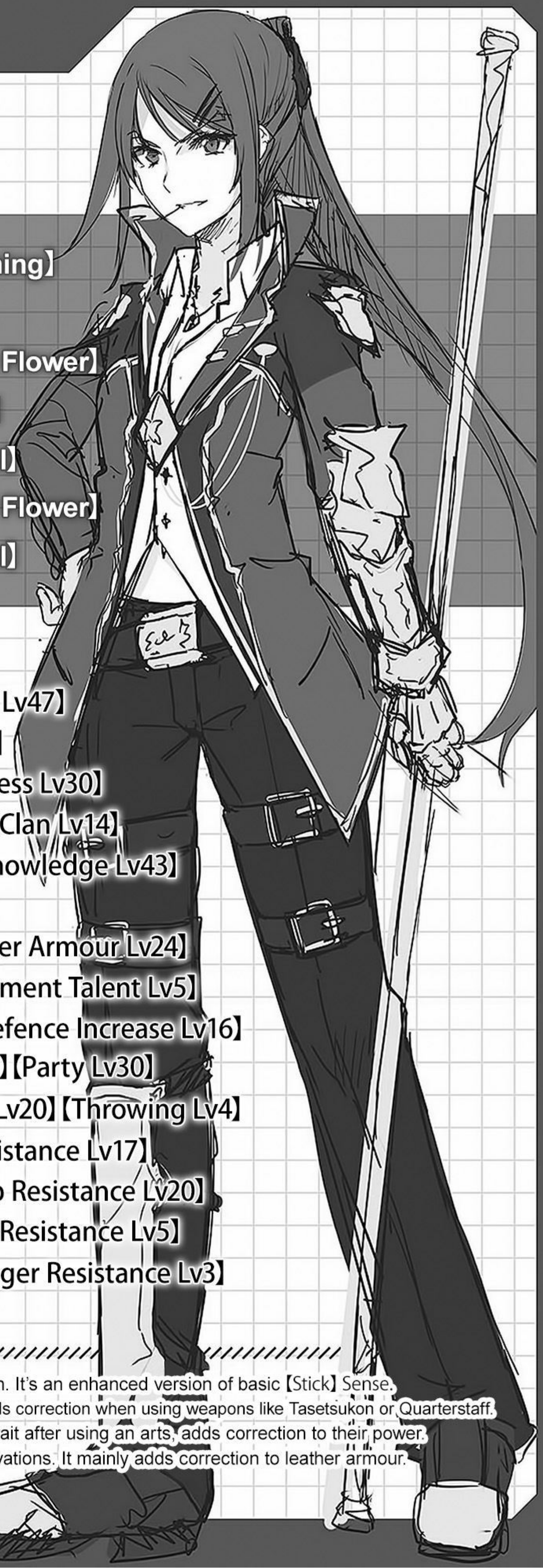
【**Connecting Sword**】is derived from【Sword】and【Whip】Senses, acquired by leveling both to a certain level. It has characteristics of both these weapons.

【**Clan**】is【Party】's higher Sense. The correction effect also spreads to allies other than those in party it overlaps with some of other Sense's effects.

【**Collector's Eye**】is a Sense specializing in discovering hidden collection and mining points.

Sense Status

» Mikadzuchi



Weapon 【Prominent Lightning】

Head —

Outerwear 【Blazing Crimson Flower】

Underwear 【Lightning Plover】

Arms 【Extended Funeral】

Torso 【Blazing Crimson Flower】

Waist 【Extended Funeral】

Acquired Senses

【Magical Stick Lv17】【Long Stick Lv47】
【Sorcery Lv7】【HP Increase Lv38】
【Physical Increase Lv26】【Swiftness Lv30】
【Physical Attack Increase Lv24】【Clan Lv14】
【Martial Artist Lv8】【Warrior's Knowledge Lv43】

Unequipped

【Stick Lv50】【Shield Lv29】【Leather Armour Lv24】
【Metal Armour Lv39】【Flame Element Talent Lv5】
【Magic Power Lv17】【Physical Defence Increase Lv16】
【Magical Defence Increase Lv44】【Party Lv30】
【Equipment Weight Reduction Lv20】【Throwing Lv4】
【Heavy Blows Lv23】【Poison Resistance Lv17】
【Paralysis Resistance Lv9】【Sleep Resistance Lv20】
【Curse Resistance Lv14】【Charm Resistance Lv5】
【Confusion Resistance Lv11】【Anger Resistance Lv3】

【Magical Stick】 is Stick'Sense's further derivation. It's an enhanced version of basic【Stick】Sense.
【Long Stick】 is one of Stick Sense's derivations. Adds correction when using weapons like Tasetsukon or Quarterstaff.
【Martial Artist】 decreases the time user has to wait after using an arts, adds correction to their power.
【Leather Armour】 is one of Armour Sense's derivations. It mainly adds correction to leather armour.